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SOMMAIRE

1. CHARLES DE KONINCK. — Abstraction from Matter : Notes on St. Thomas's Prologue to the <i>Physics</i>	133
2. HENRI-MARIE GUINDON. — Marie dans le gouvernement de l'Église (<i>suite</i>).....	197
3. ERNEST-L. FORTIN. — The Paradoxes of Aristotle's Theory of Education in the Light of Recent Controversies.....	248
OUVRAGES REÇUS À LA RÉDACTION.....	261
SOMMAIRE DES REVUES.....	265

Abstraction from Matter

NOTES ON ST. THOMAS'S PROLOGUE TO THE *PHYSICS**

In the prologue¹ to his exposition of Aristotle's *Physics*, St. Thomas shows [i] what is the mode of definition that is proper to the science of nature, [ii] what the science is about, and, finally, [iii] what is the order of its parts. The first paragraph might be translated as follows :

Since the treatise called the *Physics*, which it is our purpose to explain, is also the one that comes first in the study of nature, we must show, at its very beginning, what natural science is about — viz. its matter and subject. To this end, we should point out, on the one hand, that inasmuch as every science is in the intellect, and since a thing becomes intelligible in act insofar as it is more or less abstracted from matter, things, according as they are diversely related to matter, are the concern of different sciences. Again, since science is obtained by demonstration, and the middle term of demonstration is the definition, it follows, of necessity, that the sciences will be distinguished according to a difference in their mode of definition.

In the very first sentence of the paragraph just quoted, several terms are used whose meanings differ widely from the current ones. Our present intention is confined to showing, as best we can, what they meant to the author of the *Physics* as well as to the commentator, and why they said what they did in using those words — whatever the truth of what they held in using them. There can of course be no question of taking up the problem of what scientific knowledge is, as if we were presenting an exposition of the *Posterior Analytics*. We intend to have recourse to that treatise only to the extent required for the clarification of the above text.

* These pages, which are based on a course of lectures (given at the University of Notre Dame, 1957), aim to provide a general introduction to a philosophy of nature ancient by more than two thousand years. It is hoped that even readers whose interest in the subject is only historical, or who seek to show where the Philosopher was wrong in his general conception of science and of the study of nature, will find these notes of value. Although the reader will not long remain in doubt as to the persuasion of the author himself, still it is the latter's purpose merely to set forth what Aristotle had in mind as St. Thomas understood it. A growing interest in the subject may now be seen, not so much among professional philosophers, who often prefer to soar off on wings by no means fully fledged, into the realms of metaphysics, but among scientists (especially in Germany) who are coming to see that their own knowledge, in its inception as well as in its further development, forms in fact part of the philosophy of nature, and that this truth is an important one for the progress of their understanding of what they achieve.

1. In the Leonine edition of *In Octo Libros Physicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, nn.1 to 4 inclusive, lectio 1. Notes on the second paragraph of this prologue, in which the sciences are distinguished according to their different modes of definition, and named, will appear in the next issue of this review.

I. WHAT IS GENERALLY MEANT BY THE NAME 'SCIENCE'
IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT

1. *Not every kind of knowledge is called science*

Because the word science is frequently used to signify widely different kinds of knowledge, and since St. Thomas, in this context, has in mind a definite kind, we must first point out what this is. The expression 'natural science,' as generally understood today, refers to a type of knowledge that differs, nearly beyond recognition, from the kind of knowledge intended by 'natural science' in this paragraph. When the same word is commonly used to mean different things, and the relation between them is not clear at first sight, it sometimes helps to point out something which pertains to the same genus, but is manifestly not an instance of any of its recognized meanings. Now science is a type of knowledge. Let us therefore consider a kind of knowledge that we do not commonly call science, e.g., the knowledge that Socrates is now standing at that corner of this street. This fact may be very certain to him or to someone else who sees him there, but we are not in the habit of calling this kind of awareness 'science.' The reason seems to be not that it is knowledge of a mere individual fact, but that this fact has not been established by some mediating term. When a historical fact — e.g. that Aristotle was not the author of the *Liber de causis* — has been ascertained as the result of an orderly approach, complying with definite rules, we are wont to call this knowledge 'scientific.' And we all know what is meant when one historian is called 'more scientific' than another who is willing to receive hearsay as fact. It is futile to quarrel over the use of the word 'science' in connection with such knowledge and far better to enquire why it came to be so used. Again, of the observed relationship between the tides and the phases of the moon or between the behaviour of people and the weather, we say that they are scientifically certain. When the makers of some product assure the consumer that their brand has been 'scientifically tested,' they refer to a process of examination performed according to accepted rules. "Any mode of investigation by which scientific or other impartial and systematic knowledge is acquired" is the description of Scientific Method found in an article under this heading in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. All this suggests that the term 'science' still has to do with knowledge obtained by some recognized means or process emphasized as impartial. It is implied that anyone who can grasp the means or understand the process ought to agree that what is so discovered or so proved deserves his assent.

Among the studies called sciences, mathematical physics is often presented as so ideal in method and standards that the other depart-

ments of the study of nature are called scientific only in the measure that they approach its exactness. Now, what we must notice is that, if mathematical physics is called the most exact, it is because it attains more closely to the precision of mathematics itself, which is undoubtedly more rigorous than any other science. For mathematics proceeds, more than any other science, "in the mode of discipline,"¹ where we give the reason for a proposition that is not self-evident. In fact, when Aristotle mentions the 'disciplines' without qualification, he means mathematics.² The reader must realize that we take the term 'mathematics' in the traditional sense, which is not quite what it means today.

To show what is meant by 'science' in our strict sense of this term, we will therefore consider in illustration some examples of scientific knowledge in mathematics.

2. Illustration from Mathematics : demonstration of existence.

The geometer accepts the meaning of the word 'triangle' ; but he also proves that there *is* such a thing, as when, on the basis of the radius of a circle, he constructs an equilateral triangle. The expression 'a plane figure having its three sides equal' has meaning, but from this alone it does not follow that there can be such a thing.³ The name 'centaur' refers to 'half man and half horse,' but the fact that the term has meaning does not suppose that there is such a being, nor that there could be. 'The diagonal of a square, commensurate with the side,' has meaning, too ; yet no such thing can be.⁴

To show, concerning the equilateral triangle, *that it is*, it is not sufficient to point to a figure on the blackboard, so carefully drawn that to our eyes its three sides are indistinguishable in length ; for

1. Cf. ST. THOMAS, *In Boethium de Trinitate*, q.6, a.1.

2. It may be noted, however, that if we refused to consider as subjects of investigation those not amenable to the exactness of mathematics, we would have to renounce even mathematical physics, if only because of its dependence upon sense experience. Cf. ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics*, II, chap.3, 995 a ; ST. THOMAS, *ibid.*, lect.5, nn.334-337.

3. On the difference between the interpretation or the definition of the *meaning* of a word, and the definition of *what a thing is*, see *Post. Anal.*, II, chap.7 ; ST. THOMAS, *ibid.*, lect.5-6.

4. The question '*Can it be ?*' is not the same as '*Can it be in nature ?*' *Being* is understood here of what is true ; not of what is or can be in reality. In the present context, " 'to be' and 'is' mean that a thing is true, and 'not to be' that it is false. Similarly too in affirmation and negation, e.g. in 'Socrates is cultured,' 'is' means that this is true, or in 'Socrates is not-pale' that this is true ; but in 'the diagonal [of the square] is not commensurable with the side' 'is not' means that it is false to say it is." (*Metaph.*, V, chap.7, 1017 a 30. Cf. ST. THOMAS, *ibid.*, lect.9, nn.895-896 ; *Quodl. IX*, a.3, c. and ad 4). If someone said that the word 'horse' stands for a certain kind of vegetable, his account would not be true. Nor can we know whether a proposition is true or false unless we first grasp its true meaning.

no amount of physical measurement could verify the exactness of 'equal sides.' To designate an actual horse would be enough to show that the name 'horse' stands for something that is; this does not hold for the subjects of mathematics. While the geometer assumes the continuum as 'what is divisible without end,' according to one or more dimensions, any subject of which he demonstrates some property, e.g. of 'triangle,' must first be established by way of a construction to show that there *is* such a thing. Demonstrations by way of construction are called 'quasi operational.'¹ Every attempt at proof by experience that 'the equilateral triangle' *is* (in the sense of 'true'), must prove hopeless. How, then, can we know of what we define as 'a plane figure having its three sides equal,' that it also *is* — in the sense of true? Euclid provides the following proof:

[i] *On a given finite straight line to construct an equilateral triangle.*

Let AB be the given finite straight line.

Thus it is required to construct an equilateral triangle on the straight line AB .

With centre A and distance AB let the circle BCD be described;

[Post. 3]

again, with centre B and distance BA let the circle ACE be described;

[Post. 3]

and from the point C , in which the circles cut one another, to the points A , B , let the straight lines CA , CB be joined.

[Post. 1]

Now, since the point A is the centre of the circle CDB ,
 AC is equal to AB .

[Def. 15]

Again, since the point B is the centre of the circle CAE ,
 BC is equal to BA .

[Def. 15]

But CA was also proved equal to AB ;
therefore each of the straight lines CA , CB is equal to AB .

And things which are equal to the same thing are also equal to one another;

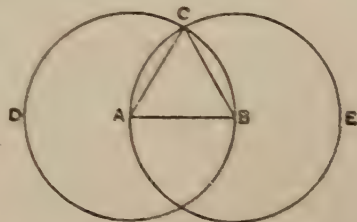
[C.N.I].

Therefore CA is also equal to CB .

Therefore the three straight lines CA , AB , BC , are equal to one another.

Therefore the triangle ABC is equilateral; and it has been constructed on the given finite straight line AB .

(Being) what it was required to do.²



1. ST. THOMAS, *In I Post. Anal.*, lect.2, n.5. In this, the mathematical disciplines somewhat resemble the productive sciences. To construct a subject, e.g., a house, is the very purpose of the latter. They remain radically distinct, however, inasmuch as the construction of a subject is the very purpose of the latter, whereas in mathematics the construction is a means of discovery (*ibid.*, lect.41, n.7).

2. Book I. Proposition 1. *The Thirteen Books of Euclid's Elements*, translated by SIR THOMAS HEATH, Cambridge University Press, 1926, 3 vol., Vol. I, pp.241-242. Cf. ST. THOMAS, *In II Post. Anal.*, lect.6, n.4.

This demonstration by way of construction shows that there is 'a triangle whose three sides are equal,' and that this is indeed a definition of 'what it is to be such a triangle,' — not just an interpretation of the expression 'equilateral triangle,' nor even a definition by a property. This kind of proof makes us discover and establishes, by means of the construction, that there is such a subject, and it is by means of the definition of the latter that any of its properties will have to be demonstrated. So much for demonstration of existence in mathematics.

3. *Demonstration of a property.*

We must now turn to the kind of demonstration which establishes a commensurately universal property following with necessity from 'what its subject is.' Let us take in illustration another proposition from Euclid : *In any triangle, if one of the sides be produced, the exterior angle is equal to the two interior and opposite angles, and the three interior angles of the triangle are equal to two right angles.* This statement is not self-evident. That 'the sum of the angles of the triangle equals two right angles' is a proposition requiring proof : it follows from something other than itself, from a reason already known. How is this reason known, and how does it lead to such a proposition ? Assuming certain demonstrations already provided, we quote the proof from Euclid :

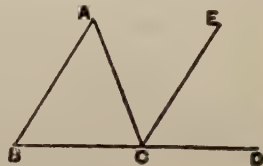
[ii] Let ABC be a triangle, and let one side of it BC be produced to D ;

I say that the exterior angle ACD is equal to the two interior and opposite angles CAB , ABC , and the three interior angles of the triangle ABC , BCA , CAB are equal to two right angles.

For let CE be drawn through the point C parallel to the straight line AB . [I, 31]

Then, since AB is parallel to CE ,
and AC has fallen upon them,
the alternate angles BAC , ACE are equal
to one another. [I, 29]

Again, since AB is parallel to
 CE ,



and the straight line BD has fallen upon them,
the exterior angle ECD is equal to the interior and opposite
angle ABC . [I, 29]

But the angle ACE was also proved equal to the angle
 BAC ;

therefore the whole angle ACD is equal to the two interior and
opposite angles BAC , ABC .

Let the angle ACB be added to each ;

therefore the angles ACD , ACB are equal to the three angles
 ABC , BCA , CAB .

But the angles ACD , ACB are equal to two right angles ;
[I, 13]

therefore the angles ABC , BCA , CAB are also equal to two right angles.

Therefore . . . etc.

Q.E.D.¹

What is the exact reason from which this property is inferred ? It is none other than the definition of the subject (triangle) to which, in the conclusion, we attribute the property 'to have the sum of its angles equal to two right angles.' Now the definition which, in this demonstration, is the middle term and contains the proper principles of the property is not just 'a figure enclosed by three straight lines,' but, as the first part of the proposition states, it is such a figure inasmuch as it has its "exterior angle equal to the two interior and opposite angles." It is in this exact respect, brought out, 'made actual,' by means of a construction ("if one of the sides be produced"),² that the triangle is both the subject and reason of the property 'to have its three interior angles equal to two right angles.'³

4. *A posteriori science*

Knowledge of a necessary, universal and commensurate property derived from the definition of its subject, is science in the fullest sense, because it follows from what is actually, on the part of the known, the proper principle of that property. In the case of mathematics, this principle or formal cause is also first known by us. (We would never say : 'This figure is a triangle because it has its angles equal to two right angles,' for this would be to put the cart before the horse.) Such knowledge, then, was called science in the most rigorous sense of the word.

But in actual usage the name 'science,' like the adjective 'scientific,' is not reserved to such knowledge alone. For although in science proper we cannot acquire knowledge of the unknown except through the mediation of something else already and better known, not everything that is first and better known to us is also prior in itself as in geometry. Hence it can happen that things better known in the

1. Book I, Proposition 32, HEATH, *ibid.*, pp.316-317.

2. ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.*, IX, chap.9, 1051 a 20 : "Geometrical constructions, too, are discovered by an actualization, because it is by dividing that we discover them. If the division were already done, they would be obvious ; but as it is, the division is only there potentially. Why is the sum of the interior angles of a triangle equal to two right angles ? Because the angles about one point [in a straight line] are equal to two right angles. If the line parallel to the side had been already drawn, the answer would have been obvious at sight." Cf. ST. THOMAS, *ibid.*, lect.10, n.1888ff.

3. Cf. ST. THOMAS, *In II Post. Anal.*, lect.1, n.9.

sense of more intelligible in themselves, which would be the proper means of a perfect demonstration, cannot at once be reached or used, because what we know first is not always what actually comes first on the part of the thing known, taken in itself.

Now, when the only knowledge accessible to us is not a proper means of proof, unlike the definitions of mathematics, which are such proper means, our only resource is to look backwards, doing our best to find our way from properties to definition, instead of from definition to properties. In the study of nature this is usually the only way in which we can make progress. For example, we know the alternation of day and night before we know the reason for it — a reason which it took some time to discover. To know that this phenomenon has always taken place, in all recorded experience, is one thing ; to know why it takes place, is another ; and the expression of the observed regularity, as a general proposition reached by induction, becomes the substitute for the definition required by science in the strict sense.

5. *Induction of self-evident principles from sense perception and imagination*

It has just been stated that very often in the study of nature, not having definitions to serve as a basis of reasoning as we have in mathematics, we must make do with propositions reached by provisional induction. This term induction is another which we must now consider if we are to understand the import of St. Thomas's preface. By induction, in general, is meant thinking our way from particulars to universals. The main thing to notice in the beginning is that there are two basically different types of induction : a distinction which is made, not with regard to the form of inductive reasoning, but on the basis of its matter. One of them passes unnoticed in ordinary life, because it goes on as unceasingly and unconsciously as breathing. It would be difficult to say just when we first suddenly understood that 'it is impossible to be and not be at the same time and in the same respect,' or that 'nothing can be a whole and a part in the same respect,' or that 'every whole number is either odd or even' (which we gather by mathematical induction.¹) But the fact is that knowledge

1. "Ipsa autem principia non eodem modo manifestantur. Sed quaedam considerantur *inductione*, quae est ex particularibus imaginariis, utputa quod omnis numerus est par aut impar. Quaedam vero accipiuntur *sensu*, sicut in naturalibus ; puta quod omne quod vivit indiget nutrimento. Quaedam vero *consuetudine*, sicut in moralibus, utpote quod concupiscentiae diminuuntur si eis non obediamus" (St. Thomas, *In I Ethicor.* lect. 11). The term induction in this passage is reserved to mathematics because here it is the most accomplished and least ambiguous. That every living thing stands in need of food is not that obvious. Even the principle of contradiction, the most certain of all, is difficult to express without confusion ; we must qualify what is meant by 'to be' and 'not to be,' 'at the same time' and 'in the same respect.' Further proof of this can be seen in the

of the most general principles, presupposed as it is to all reasoning,¹ is preceded by an induction, so natural that it passes unobserved.

The other kind of induction, which, now spontaneously, now deliberately, considers the particular cases within reach and concludes from them to a general proposition,² is familiar to us as the typical procedure of the arts and crafts as well as of experimental science in general. These propositions are made to serve as principles, but they are not the reason for the regularities which they enounce.

In comparing these two sorts of induction, it must be noted that they differ, not merely in the frequency or ease with which they are carried on, but more fundamentally in the role assigned to the enumeration of particular instances and in the certitude finally achieved. It may sound surprising, but an induction may lead to complete certitude without all instances having been covered, as in the case of first, self-evident principles ; and, on the other hand, may cover all instances without yielding a sufficient reason. The first and basic type of induction, whereby the mind moves from sense perception towards general, self-evident principles, is nothing like a complete enumeration, nor do we need one. Indeed, a principle like ' it is impossible to be and not to be ' etc., or ' any two things which, in the same respect, are like to a third, are in that respect like to one another, ' could hardly be the result of an examination of all the cases, since these are innumerable. In the primordial process of acquiring knowledge, propositions such as these are consequent upon sensation, memory and experience ; yet, once we grasp them, we see that they must hold good in all possible instances. In other words, it is characteristic of this first type of induction that no attempt is made to offer the survey of the particular cases as the proper reason for the truth of the universal proposition.³

fact that the primacy of this principle is forever in debate. As to the part-whole principle, it is extremely ambiguous, for there are wholes which are identical with each of their parts, namely the logical wholes with their subjective parts ; besides, any part of a line is not less divisible *ad infinitum* than the whole, and there are wholes that are not composed of the parts into which they can be divided, such as a circle.

1. Most modern writers on philosophy of science assume that by first, self-evident principles of a science, ARISTOTLE meant what he called ' common principles ', from which, he showed (*Post. Anal.*, I, chap.9 and 10), there can be no demonstration, although demonstration depends upon their truth.

2. This type of induction is analysed in *Priora Analytica*, II, chap.23, 68 b 5. See also ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *ibid.*, Tract.VII, chap.4. The text of this important exposition of the *Priora* has been transcribed from the Borgnet edition, long out of print, and made available in mimeograph by Michel Doyon, 1215-1223, chemin Sainte-Foy, Québec 6, Canada, 1951.

3. See *Post. Anal.*, II, chap.19, 99 b 15. Cf. ST. THOMAS, *ibid.*, lect.20. — (On the distinction between sense-perception, memory and experience, see also *Metaphysics*, I, chap.1, 980 b 20 – 981 a 30. ST. THOMAS, *ibid.*, lect.1). — Of this universality ARISTOTLE says that it is " at rest in the mind " inasmuch as it is eventually and suddenly perceived as independent of the particular, variable, instances ; although it could not be achieved without

Cases may be referred to by way of illustration, but the reason for the truth of the proposition is nothing else but what we intuit in any single instance — once the proposition has been achieved.

Since the kind of induction just described never offers the number of particular instances as the reason for accepting the strictly universal proposition, it is not knowledge acquired through prior principles and can be called science only in a loose sense. That it does nevertheless have some claim to the title is clear, since it enjoys great certitude and is a necessary preliminary to all science.¹

6. *Not even complete enumeration is the same as to provide the scientific reason*

We must now turn our attention to the second type of induction, where the multiplicity and similarity of the particular cases are actually given as the reason for a general statement offered as a conclusion. In this way of reasoning from particular to universal, the enumeration of the cases may be either complete or incomplete. By 'complete' is meant an enumeration which exhausts all possible cases, implying, of course, that they are clearly limited in number. Now, even when complete enumeration is possible, so that the property x is shown to be true of every possible instance, the inductive argument may still fail to provide a proper, universal reason for a general statement which is nevertheless certain.²

sensation of some instances, without memory and comparison of the instances retained, the results of which is experience. If we had no such knowledge, no word we use could have any meaning beyond that of vocal sounds as produced by beasts, i.e., signs of a state of passion, as the dog's bark or the lion's roar. For this type of induction, modern logicians still refer to ARISTOTLE, and call it "immediate" or "intuitive induction." (See, e.g., W. E. JOHNSON, *Logic*, Part II, chap.VIII, Cambridge, 1922, pp.188ff.; MORRIS COHEN and ERNEST NAGEL, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New-York, chap.XIV, pp.273ff.). "Intuitive induction" is perhaps not a very happy expression for the reason that this induction and the intuition that follows it are not one thing. The "seeing" or intuition consequent upon the induction is not the proper effect of the induction itself.

1. Traditional philosophy accounts for this use of the word science. Cf. *Post. Anal.*, I, chap.31, 88 a 5. ST. THOMAS, *ibid.*, lect.42, n.9; and *In VI Ethicor.*, lect.3, n.1145.

2. "An error of this kind is similar to the error into which we fall concerning particulars: e.g. if A belongs to all B, and B to all C, A will belong to all C. If then a man knows that A belongs to everything to which B belongs, he knows that A belongs to C. But nothing prevents his being ignorant that C exists; e.g. let A stand for two right angles, B for triangle, C for a particular diagram of a triangle. A man might think that C did not exist, though he knew that every triangle contains two right angles; consequently he will know and not know the same thing at the same time. For the expression 'to know that every triangle has its angles equal to two right angles' is ambiguous, meaning to have the knowledge either of the universal or of the particulars. Thus then he knows that C contains two right angles with a knowledge of the universal, but not with a knowledge of the particulars; consequently his knowledge will not be contrary to his ignorance" (*Priora Anal.*, II, chap.20, 67 a 5-20).

An example using the materials of geometry will show what is meant by a complete enumeration failing to reach the proper reason for the proposition enounced by way of a conclusion. Suppose one established that 'the sum of the angles of any triangle is two right angles' by way of induction, that is, by verifying this property in each of the three kinds of triangle, "first in the equilateral, again in the isosceles, and afterwards in the scalene triangle."¹ Seeing that a rectilineal three-sided figure either has its three sides equal, only two of its sides equal, or its three sides unequal, and that there is no other possibility, the general statement will be quite certain: 'In every kind of triangle, the sum of the angles is two right angles.' Yet the verification of the general statement by enumeration of all the possible kinds of triangle does not provide the commensurately one and universal reason why it is true of each kind.

... Even if one prove of each kind of triangle that it has its angles together equal to two right angles, whether by means of the same or different proofs; still, as long as one treats separately equilateral, scalene, and isosceles, one does not yet know, except sophistically, that *triangle* has its angles equal to two right angles, nor does one yet know that triangle universally has this property, even if there is no other species of triangle but these. For one does not know that triangle as such has this property, nor even that every triangle has it, except in a numerical sense; nor does one know it according to the species [triangle] universally, though there be no kind [of triangle] in which one does not recognize this property.²

In the study of nature, too, an induction is judged complete when some general proposition is taken as true because it has been verified of each member of an adequate division; as when it is said that "irritability (the power of responding to a stimulus) is the general property of living beings" because it is true of both animals and plants.³

1. On whether or not ARISTOTLE's mention of such proofs (*Post. Anal.*, I, chap.5, 74 a15-35) refers to a historical development of the theorem, see HEATH, *op. cit.*, Vol.I, pp.317ff.

2. *Post. Anal.*, I, chap.5, 74 a 25-35. Cf. ST. THOMAS, *ibid.*, lect. 11-12. — Inasmuch as 'triangle' and other types of plane figure, such as circle, divide the genus 'plane figure,' triangle is a species which, with regard to the kinds of triangle that in turn divide triangle into species, has the nature of genus. Figure is called the 'remote genus,' triangle 'proximate genus.'

3. Even this so-called complete induction is only hypothetical, since it must assume that the terms of the division have been verified. Such tentative or dialectical use of the 'dici de omni' provides a universality that was formerly qualified as '*ut nunc*, as of now,' i.e. valid in all the cases actually known. Cf. ST. THOMAS, *In I Post. Anal.*, lect.9, n.4. — Many philosophers of science nowadays are shy of, or even categorically reject, all so-called first, self-evident, necessary principles, both general and proper. To their mind, all principles must be stated in hypothetical form, qualified by 'if.' We may mention three points that appear to be in their favour: (a) The consequences of reasoning are at least materially the same. E.g., 'If the exterior angle of a triangle is equal to the two opposite interior angles, its three angles are equal to two right angles.' If you remove the

However, although this may be the reason why we believe the property to be common, it is not a commensurately universal reason, which must be one and adequate to all possible cases. The same judgment should be passed on an argument showing that all mobile beings are bodies because both animate and inanimate things — an adequate division of mobile beings — reveal three spatial dimensions. This is far from being the commensurate universal reason why anything that can be in movement must be a body. A genuine demonstration would have to show that 'to be *per se* in movement' belongs primarily to body as such.

More often, however, the induction used in the study of nature cannot be made complete. We say, for instance, that 'every man is mortal.' Yet, if this proposition is considered to be general merely because no man has been known to survive, its basis is an induction that is necessarily incomplete. For all practical purposes, the proposition is sound, though based on an incomplete induction and universal only *ut nunc* ; but as such, it does not offer the reason why man is mortal. The observed fact 'no man has been known to survive' is not the natural reason why 'every man is mortal.' If the sun rises tomorrow, it is not because, in all human experience, it has always happened before.¹ So long as we cannot find the reason why they

"if" and make the statement categorical, the conclusion will be materially the same, but you will not know whether it is true or not. (b) Most universal terms and enunciations are no more than what we call universal *ut nunc*, that is, provisional, and must be taken as posits subject to change. There was a time when 'All swans are white' was valid. (c) It is possible to say that 'All statements are uncertain, including this one' an enunciation which is grammatically correct. This retreat from truth retains all the same a logical structure similar, in some respects, to that concerned with true knowledge acquired by induction and demonstration. A logical positivist such as Hans Reichenbach will be satisfied with knowledge, whether it be true or not, so long as it is an instrument of action, and we can readily produce examples where this is true. A speculative theory need not be true to ensure results that are in practice true. The ancient hypothesis that malaria was caused by the evening miasms of swamps produced results for those who followed the advice to stay away from them. The explosion of the Bomb did not depend upon the speculative truth of Einstein's theory. But it proved nonetheless that the theory is at least on the right track. In most departments of natural science, no matter how great our desire for ultimate truth, we never get beyond universality *ut nunc*.

1. ARISTOTLE's famous hypothesis of a radical difference between the phenomena on our planet and those on an astronomical scale is a case in point. He assumed that the latter were entirely uniform, unaging and unalterable, from which he concluded that they could not be subject to contrary states, such as hot and cold, so that the heavenly bodies, e.g. the sun, were actually incorruptible. "The mere evidence of the senses [he said] is enough to convince us of this, at least according to human belief. For in the whole range of time past, so far as our inherited records reach, no change appears to have taken place either in the whole scheme of the outermost heaven or in any of its proper parts" (*De Caelo*, I, chap. 3, 270 b 10). "Nevertheless [St. THOMAS adds, in his commentary, lect. 7, n. 6] this is not necessary, but only probable. For the more a thing is lasting, the more time is required to observe its change ; for instance, the change that over a period of two or three years takes place in a man is not as readily observed as that which affects a dog, or some

occur, the regularities observed in nature (such as the eventual death of every animate thing) will by themselves provide no strictly universal proposition. The proper, universal reason why man, as well as any other animate thing, is mortal must be found in what is inseparable from being an animate thing, and therefore from being a man.

7. *The 'universal' of demonstration is not the same as
'to be said of all' — or "dici de omni"*

The universal property, as understood in strict science or demonstration — of which an example is 'to have its three angles equal to two right angles' — must show the following characteristics : [a] it must be true of all instances that are under it (e.g., of each and every triangle) ; [b] its subject must belong to the very definition of the property (e.g., 'to have two angles equal to two right angles' implies triangle as having an exterior angle equal to the two opposite interior angles, viz. the *per se* subject of this property which follows from it with necessity) ; [c] it is primarily in that of which it is said (i.e. primarily in triangle as such, and not primarily in this and that of its species).¹

To assume that one has demonstrated that the triangle as such has the sum of its angles equal to two right angles by showing it to be true primarily of each one of its kinds, this is to be satisfied with the mere appearance of a reason. In fact the statement : 'In every kind of triangle the sum of the angles is two right angles,' when it is understood as the result of an induction by complete enumeration, is not a demonstrative conclusion at all, but a mere restatement of something already known, viz. [a] that any triangle is either *e*, *i*, or *s* ; [b] that *e*, *i*, and *s* each has its angles equal to two right angles.

What we are trying to show is that to establish something by induction as true of a class of things is not to prove anything about the nature of the thing in itself. Such inductions, however exhaustive, will always suffer from this limitation. The reason is that a class, as such, is never the same thing as a universal. A class, or collection, may be no more than an incidental whole, a grouping which supposes something held in common by many objects, but not necessarily something pertaining to what they are in themselves. If, instead of meaning 'a rectilinear figure contained by three sides,' which is one in notion, the term 'triangle' were used to stand primarily and immediately

other shorter-lived animal, during a time of equal length. Hence one could say that while the heaven is naturally corruptible, it is so long-lasting that the whole span of time which memory can record is not enough to observe its change." — Thus, according to both ARISTOTLE and ST. THOMAS their whole theory about celestial bodies was no more than a hypothesis.

1. *Post. Anal.*, I, chap.4 and 5, 73 a 20-74 b 5. ST. THOMAS, *ibid.*, lect.9-12.

for the *class* of each and all triangles, 'triangle' would lose its true universal meaning ; it could be said of no triangle whatsoever, neither of a kind nor of an instance of a kind. Where the term 'triangle' is intended to mean a class of things, to say triangle of equilateral, or of *this* particular one, would mean that 'equilateral' is the class of all triangles, whether equilateral or no. Likewise,¹ if we interpreted 'man' to mean primarily and immediately the class 'men' (that is, all of the subjective parts of the universal nature 'man,' viz. all beings of which 'man' can be predicated), then, to say 'man' of Socrates would mean that he is each and every man : Socrates and all men who are not Socrates, viz. all who have been, are, shall be, might have been, and even all possible men. Actually, a collection, as such, like an individual, can be predicated only of itself, viz. in a proposition of identity, 'A is A,' 'Socrates is Socrates,' or 'All Greeks are Greeks.'

If 'triangle' meant primarily and no more than the *class* of all triangles, the 'equilateral' could not even be called 'triangle' since this would imply that the class of all triangles is in the same respect both equal and unequal to only part of itself. It would be false to say : 'A surface enclosed by three straight lines is a figure,' or that 'it is a rectilinear figure,' or 'a rectilinear figure that has three sides.' For all these terms ('figure,' 'rectilinear figure,' etc.), when used to signify collections *qua* collections, are equivalent to symbols, viz. the kind of arbitrary signs that must be distinguished from names.

II. THE OBJECT AND SUBJECT OF A SCIENCE

St. Thomas said, in the passage quoted at the head of these pages, that "we must show, at its very beginning, what natural science is about, viz., its matter and subject." A well-known sentence from A. N. Whitehead's *Introduction to Mathematics* seems to advance the contrary opinion : "the last thing to be discovered in any science is what the science is really about."² Yet, towards the beginning of the same *Introduction* he had said that students should know "from the very beginning of their course . . . what the science is about."³ That there is no contradiction here can be made plain by first pointing out what is meant by 'the object of a science,' as distinguished from its subject, for the object includes the subject.

1. Cf. JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *Cursus Philosophicus*, Logica, P. I, lib. II, chap.10-12 ; *Quaest. disput.*, q.6, (edit. Reiser, T.I, pp.29-35 ; pp.166-182).

2. P.223.

3. P.8. — We do not aim to show what WHITEHEAD actually means by 'science.' We have pointed out elsewhere (*Random Reflections on Science and Calculation*, dans *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 1956, Vol.XII, n.1) that what he calls 'mathematics' is what the ancients had named *logismos*, i.e. the art of calculation.

By the *object* of a science, in the strict sense of the term science, we mean knowledge acquired as the result of demonstration, e.g., that 'the plane triangle has its angles equal to two right angles.' The object of science is therefore nothing other than the conclusion, in which something (e.g., 'to have its angles equal to two right angles') is said about something (viz., 'triangle').¹ This object, then, is something complex : a composition of subject and predicate, which in perfect science follows from the definition of the subject (e.g., to be a triangle is 'to have an exterior angle equal to . . .'), or in other instances, from the substitute for a definition. By the *subject* of a science, we mean that *about which* we have knowledge by demonstration, viz., the very subject of the conclusion or 'that about which' (e.g., 'triangle') something is asserted by means of demonstration (e.g., the property 'to have the sum of its angles equal to . . .').

Now the subject about which we assert something in the object or conclusion of the demonstration does not of course make its first appearance in the conclusion. Something has already been predicated of that same subject in the principles or premises of the demonstration. For example, of the *triangle* we said that 'it has its exterior angle equal to the two interior and opposite angles,' and it is in virtue of this that the conclusion follows, viz., that 'the *triangle* has its three angles equal to . . .'. In other words, the subject of scientific knowledge is both [i] what is first known, viz., that about which we seek science,² and [ii] what is last known, viz., this same subject *qua* known to possess such or such a property. The subject, considered in the latter respect, is called the 'term' of the science.³ There is, then, no contradiction in saying, on the one hand, that students should know "from the very beginning of their course . . . what the science is about," and, on the other hand, that "the last thing to be discovered in any science is what the science is really about."

III. THE DISTINCTION AND RESPECTIVE UNITY OF THE SCIENCES, IN GENERAL

Although every demonstration produces scientific knowledge, a particular demonstration, obviously, does not constitute a science all by itself, since, if it did, there would be as many sciences as there are particular demonstrations. Rather, a single science, such as geometry, embraces many objects or conclusions, e.g., that 'the sum of the angles

1. *In I Post Anal.*, lect.10, n.8.

2. In geometry, that which is first known and about which we seek scientific knowledge is magnitude ; whereas the particular subjects are known, we say, by way of construction. These, in turn, are known before the demonstration of their properties. *In I Post. Anal.*, lect.2, n.5.

3. *In I Post. Anal.*, lect.41, n.7.

of a triangle is two right angles' ; that ' the angle in a semi-circle is a right angle ' ; etc. And these form what is called the *material object* of a science. Now what is it that gathers such objects into a single science? Why do certain conclusions belong to mathematics and not to the science of nature? This will be what is called the *formal object* of the science.

We have noted that the means by which we acquire scientific knowledge are none other than the definitions, since the definition is the proper principle of the conclusion or object of science. What, we might ask, do the definitions of geometry have in common? To make this point briefly, we propose the question : how could we show that *in nature* there is such a thing as an equilateral triangle? By what method could we verify that this triangle cut in bronze has its three sides equal, or that its exterior angle is equal to the two opposite and interior angles? Or by what means could we demonstrate that the angles of the metal triangle are equal to two right angles? The only possibility is measurement by means of some standard or 'measure.' By a 'measure' we mean 'that by which the quantity of a thing is known primarily.' If the measurement is to be perfectly exact, the measure must be indivisible. Now, 'to be quite indivisible' is true only of the 'one' that is the principle of number, and not of magnitude ; of the things, in nature, that are continuous, there can be no exact measure. The reason for this will become clearer if it is noted, that, as Aristotle said,

the measure is always homogeneous with the measured : the measure of magnitudes is a magnitude, and in particular that of length is a length, that of breadth, a breadth, that of articulate sound articulate sound, that of weight a weight, that of units a unit. (For we must state the matter so, and not say that the measure of numbers is a number ; we ought indeed to say this if we were to use the corresponding form of words, but the claim does not really correspond — it is as if one claimed that the measure of units is units, and not a unit ; number is a plurality of *units*.)¹

But at the same time, since the measure of a magnitude is itself a magnitude, and every magnitude *qua* continuous is divisible without end, the measure itself must be indefinitely divisible. Hence, to be entirely exact, the standard of length would have to be length without length, both divisible and indivisible. That is why, for practical purposes, some length, chosen by convention, like the yard or the metre, simply must be declared the correct standard.² The subdivisions

1. *Metaph.*, X, chap.1, 1053 a 25.

2. Cf. ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.*, X, chap. 1, 1052 a 15-1053 b 8. ST. THOMAS, *ibid.*, lect.1 and 2 — SIR ARTHUR EDDINGTON, *Space, Time and Gravitation*, Prologue, pp.1-16. Of the standard of length SIR ARTHUR says that "it has no length." This paradox may prove helpful to call attention to the difference between (a) length as 'what is extended according to one dimension' and (b) length as 'what is known by means of the measure of length.'

of such a standard make possible some improvement in precision,¹ but can never attain the exactness of mathematics, nor permit the demonstration of a theorem.

The reason why complete exactness is possible in geometry is that the definitions we use are formally independent of, and have no reference to, the order of sense experience, and the conclusions are established as following from such definitions with necessity. Yet by means of a construction² geometry can demonstrate that there is a triangle whose sides are equal, and that the angles of any triangle are equal to two right angles. Why cannot the same be done for a metal triangle? Why should the object of sense experience offer such hindrance to exactness? The answer to this difficulty, and the reason for the distinction between the 'matter' and the 'subject' of a science, lie in the quotation from St. Thomas, "a thing becomes intelligible in act insofar as it is more or less abstracted from matter."

Now the word 'matter' in 'abstraction from matter' and in 'the matter of a science' does not mean quite the same thing. Let us begin with 'abstraction from matter.' What is this 'matter' from which we must prescind as an essential condition of science?

IV. WHAT IS MEANT BY 'MATTER' IN 'ABSTRACTION FROM MATTER'?

In our scientific age the student of nature would, on the whole, show little concern for a doctrine such as that of 'abstraction from matter,' and apparently one can do well without it. Some might even suggest, since we know so little about 'matter,' except, for instance, that it is convertible with 'energy,' that the question of abstraction from matter' refers either to some outdated theory or to a knowledge not yet had. Fortunately, some recognized authors, especially in the field of mathematics and physics, still make very definite statements which show that a theory of abstraction is even now of no less consequence than it has been in the past. On the other hand, the reader may be willing to bear with us if we promise to show how the question

The measure itself must have length in the first sense; but it cannot have length in the second sense since, by definition, the standard of length cannot be measured (except *per accidens*, as when we express the ratio between the standard of one system of measurement, e.g., the meter, in terms of the standard of another system, e.g., the English or the U.S. 'yard,' where in either case, the measured ceases to be taken as a standard.

1. The meter, although of considerable magnitude, may be called the 'minimum of length,' provided we mean 'the material object whose variations owing, e.g., to changes in temperature, can be more precisely controlled; while the variations in a smaller object would be less noticeable.' This more readily controllable exactness is presupposed to the subdivisions of the standard.

2. Such proofs are called "quasi operational demonstrations." *In I Post. Anal.*, lect.2, n.5.

of abstraction from matter as a condition of the sciences and of their distinction arose in the mind of some ancient philosophers whose terminology is still in use. This may prove the best means to decide whether or not such a doctrine is still relevant. To this end, it will not be enough to point out what these philosophers intended when using such words as 'matter' and 'abstraction.' All this is bound to still another doctrine, a general, more basic one concerning the use of words and their various impositions.

Both the Greek word ὕλη and the Latin *materia* originally meant 'timber,' and then what we call 'lumber'; they were further extended to mean any 'building material,' including stone as well as lumber, bricks, cement, etc.; finally they were extended to mean 'that of which' anything is composed, even though this might be as various as the *vapor* of a cloud, the *sides* of a triangle, or the *terms* of a syllogism.¹

1. *Original meanings of words and new impositions*

Now a word may have some original meaning which it is well to know if its later impositions are to be understood.² That is, whenever the latter apply to things which cannot be known nor, therefore, named, without reference to something earlier and more known to us. For, since words are signs of our concepts, and concepts are the mental images of things, words can refer to things only through the medium of the mind's conception of them.³ The way in which words signify does not depend immediately on the way in which the things that they stand for are in themselves, but on the way they become known to us and are present in the mind. And hence it is that we can name a thing only as we know it, and that

in naming things we follow the progress of intellectual knowledge. Now our intellectual knowledge proceeds from the better known to the less known. Accordingly, we transfer names of things more known to signify things less

1. LIDDELL and SCOTT (*Greek-English Lexicon*) list the following meanings: I. *forest, woodland; forest-trees*. II. *wood cut down; firewood, fuel; brushwood; timber*. III. *the stuff of which a thing is made, material; generally, materials; in philosophy, matter, first in Aristotle, etc.*

2. The word *imposition* is here used in a scholastic sense, described by Webster as 'the application of a name to a thing.' Unlike mere vocal sounds, such as the growls and whimpers of animals, names do not have meanings by nature but by convention. It is man who deliberately confers or imposes their significance. Sometimes the term *application* may be used instead of *imposition*, but it should be borne in mind that not every application of a word constitutes an imposition of meaning, nor is every novel application a new imposition. Metaphors like "a heart of stone," "a huge ox of a man" do not change the original meaning of "stone" or "ox," but merely apply a word, in its first imposition, to an object which is in no proper sense what that first imposition designates. A new imposition would destroy the metaphorical force of the word.

3. ARISTOTLE, *Peri Hermeneias*, I, chap.1.

known to us. Hence it is that . . . the word *distance* has been transferred from things that are apart locally, to all contraries ; and in like manner words pertaining to local movement we use to signify the other kinds of movement [viz., according to quality or magnitude], because bodies, inasmuch as they are circumscribed by place, are better known to us.¹

That is why extended meanings of words indicate an order of progress in knowledge. St. Thomas illustrates this point in the following passage :

We can speak of a word in two ways : either according to its first imposition, or according to an extended use of it. This is shown in the word *sight*, which was originally imposed to mean the act of the sense of sight, and then, inasmuch as sight is the more excellent and trustworthy of our senses, according to common usage it extends to all knowledge obtained through the other senses. Thus we say : *see how it tastes, how it smells, or how warm it is*. Further [the word 'sight'] is extended to knowledge by the intellect, as in : *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God* [MATH., v, 8]. And thus it is with the word *light*. For it was first designed to mean that which makes manifest to the sense of sight. Afterwards it was extended to that which makes manifest according to knowledge of any kind.

And so we say things like : ' Let us look at this problem in the light of new evidence.' What, then, is the *proper* meaning of this word ? St. Thomas goes on to make the following important distinction : " If, then, the word [light] is taken according to its first imposition, it is used metaphorically of spiritual things. But if taken according as by common usage it is extended to any sort of clarifying or making plain, then it is properly said of spiritual things." ² If taken after this new imposition, which still refers to the original one as meaning what is better known to us, the word *light* is, in fact, used more properly of intellectual things — even though less known to us — since the light of science, for instance, has far more of the nature of ' what makes plain ' than candlelight has.³ To the man unaware of this change of imposition, the ' light of new evidence ' might seem no more than metaphor ; for him, nothing but the light which permits our eyes to see could be called light in any proper sense.⁴

2. Original meaning and etymology

Now concerning the word *matter*, the original meaning we have in mind should be distinguished from the word's origin or etymology,⁵ which is quite contingent.

1. *Ia IIae*, q.7, a.1, c.

2. *Ia Pars*, q.67, a.1, c.

3. *Q. D. de Potentia*, q.4, a.2, ad 3.

4. More specifically, unless the value of extended meaning is granted, most of the terms used in philosophy, and all metaphysical terms, will have to be taken as metaphors.

5. From the Greek *etymologia* : the real, true (*etymon*) or primitive meaning of a word.

The etymology of a word is one thing, its meaning is another. For its etymology shows that *from which* the word was taken for the purpose of signification [*id a quo imponitur nomen ad significandum*] : whereas the meaning of the word concerns *that upon which the word is imposed* for the purpose of signifying [*id ad quod significandum nomen imponitur*]. These things are not always the same : for the name *lapis* is taken from *laesio pedis*,¹ but this is not what it means ; else, iron, since it hurts the foot, would be a stone.²

Yet whatever the etymology of the word *lapis* — or of our own word *stone*, for that matter — the meaning we are concerned with here would be that of *lapis* as the name of this kind of object to which we can point a finger, and not with the name as drawn from the possibility of a stone affecting us in this way or that. A person may know the primary imposition of a word without knowing exactly how it came to get it in the etymological sense. For instance, the name *Metaphysics* came to mean what it does in a very casual way. Because of the place assigned to them — after the *Physics* — by an early compiler of Aristotle's works, certain treatises were called *Metaphysics* : *μετὰ τὰ φυσικά*. This provides us with the etymology of the name, i.e., 'that whence the name was taken' ; whereas the primary imposition of *metaphysica* as a single word refers to treatises which, in the proper order of learning, are to be studied after those on nature. Eventually, by a new imposition, going beyond yet embracing the previous one, *metaphysica*, as Boethius (*cir.* 480-524) employed this term, referred to the science which Aristotle himself had called *First Philosophy* and *Theology* — 'First' by reason of its principles, 'Theology' because of its principal term, viz., knowledge of what is divine.³

Of course, 'that from which the signification of the word is drawn' or 'that whence the name is imposed,' and 'that which the word signifies' are sometimes the same, viz. in the case of words conveying what is immediately known to our senses, such as *hot, cold, hard, white*, — words which are verified directly by reference to sense experience, and which are in no other way verifiable. The reason for this resides in the fact that even of the things which are present to our senses, and at any rate first and more known to us, we do not know directly what they are in themselves ; this we can approach only through something extrinsic to their nature, viz., some sensible effect or quality.⁴ What we first discern of a horse, for example, is

1. This etymology, reported by ST. ISIDOR OF SEVILLE (*cir.* 570-636), is in fact incorrect.

2. *IIa IIae*, q.92, a.1, ad 2. ; *Q. D. de Potentia*, q.9, a.3, ad 1.

3. Outside the aristotelian tradition, for centuries now the name *metaphysics* (as the adjective *metaphysical*) has had almost as many different meanings as there have been authors to use it, its etymology being the only common aspect of the word to survive.

4. *Ia Pars*, q.13, a.6, c.

what appears to the senses and allows us to tell it from a cow, or pig, etc. These colours, textures, sounds, we can name at once, and, in such instances, '*that from which* the signification is drawn' does not differ from '*what* the name is intended to mean,' although that to which these qualities belong is still not truly known as to what it is in itself absolutely.¹

But it is perhaps well to point out that these qualities or operations which lead to a first attempt at naming a thing like a horse are not to be confused with the distinctive properties which truly set a horse apart from other things. Further knowledge may oblige us to change our minds about what constitute real differences. We may become acquainted with an animal like the zebra, let us say, possessing all the traits we had assigned as peculiar to the horse, and yet endowed with a few more of its own. What was thought to characterize a horse would now appear to be only something it has in common with certain other animals. In other words, if we assumed that we knew a given substance, e.g. a woodpecker, as to what sets it apart from all other things absolutely, just because we knew the word 'woodpecker' in its derivation from some other words previously formed to signify a substance and operations or effects of what we call a woodpecker, we would be like a man who, understanding that *bluefish* is derived from *blue* plus *fish*, insisted that every blue fish ought to be a bluefish, and all bluefish, blue. — Such examples may seem somewhat outlandish, yet the confusion they illustrate is widespread among philosophers and even among their critics.² To cling to first impositions as the only valid ones may be just as foolish as to lose oneself in vague, extended meanings without comprehending the basic imposition to which these may owe their force.

3. *Names that are not taken from other things*

It should be noted, however, that names signifying substances, such as *man*, *horse*, *tree*, *stone*, etc., can never have the immediate meanings of words like *noise*, *smell*, *sweet*, *pain*, *large*, *smooth*, *inside*, *feel*, *move*, etc. Terms like these are the most basic in any language. Whatever their philological origin, they are not named from other things: *that which* they mean is the same as *that from which* their signification is drawn. Now the fact that this identity holds only in

1. Obvious examples of substance-names taken from a perceptible quality or action already named would be *quicksilver* or *rattlesnake*; they do not signify the fluidity of mercury or the rattle of a certain type of snake. The word *snake* is another example, being kin to *sneak*, as well as to the Old German *snachan*, to creep.

2. The criticisms leveled against philosophical jargon by the 'logical positivists' are only too often well taken and should be turned to advantage.

the case of objects immediately known by our senses¹ should make us aware of how important it is to take into account what happens in the knower between his apprehension of a thing and his naming of it. Different words are intended to signify different things. But the differences indicated by variations in names are seldom the proper differences which set the things themselves apart from one another. If the knower, who imposes a meaning upon a word, does not actually attain the essential differences between the things named, he may in his naming of them, refer to some trait which, though admittedly not the essential difference, is used instead of it — as in the name *rattlesnake*. If we assumed that the warning sound referred to in this name, which is that whence it was imposed, was actually *what* the name meant, we would imply, gratuitously, that this sound was the essential difference of *that which* we name.² To sum up, if the essential differences between things were grasped at once, the differences of names would be taken from them : *that whence* they signify would be *that which* they signify — the specific differences of the things themselves. The whole relevance of the distinction between the specific difference of the thing itself and the trait from which the thing's name is taken derives from the fact that we do not know outright the essential differences of things, and that we can name things only as we know them.³

1. As we shall see in Part II, chap. 3, there is a notable difference between interpreting a word like *horse* by pointing to such an animal, and interpreting the word *white* by designating a white horse. What we call *white* is something sensible *per se*, whereas a white horse, as a substance, is sensible only *per accidens* — as we shall explain further on.

2. The word *rattlesnake* may, as a composite name, be used to confirm the distinction between etymology and signification. For, that which this name signifies, is not the two things called *rattle* and *snake*, these being only that 'from which' the name has been imposed. The components of this name can signify separately, but they cease to do so when taken together as one name. "The reason is that a single name is imposed to signify a simple concept ; for, that whence the name is imposed to signify is not the same as that which the name signifies ; as *lapis* from *laesio pedis*, which is not what the name signifies : for it was imposed to mean the concept of a thing. Hence it is that a part of the composite name imposed to signify a simple concept, does not signify part of the composite conception from which the name was imposed to signify. An expression [e.g., 'pale man'] signifies the composite conception itself : hence a part of the expression signifies a part of the composite conception" (ST. THOMAS, *In I Perih.*, lect.4, n.9).

3. "That a name is said to be imposed 'from something' can be taken [a] either on the part of the one who imposes it, or [b] on the part of the thing upon which it is imposed. In the latter case, a name is said to be imposed from that which completes the notion of the thing it signifies, viz., the specific difference of the thing [i.e. that which sets it apart from other things]. However, since the essential differences are unknown to us, we sometimes use accidents or effects in their stead . . . and name the things accordingly. And thus it is that, whatever is used to take the place of the essential difference is also that whence the name is imposed, considered on the part of the one who imposes the meaning : as when *lapis* is imposed from an effect, *laedere pedem*. And this need not be that which the word is intended to mean before all ; the word means that instead of which we use the effect [viz., *laedere pedem*]" (ST. THOMAS, *Q. D. de Veritate*, q.4, a.1, ad 8).

However, though the relationship between meaning and etymology should not be confused with the dependence of a new and extended imposition upon a prior meaning, it must not be thought that knowledge of a word's origin is of importance only to the philologist. Etymology, providing as it does a kind of reason why a given word was formed and used to signify this or that, has the advantage of referring us to something known even before the first imposition of that word. For instance, the verb 'to manifest' — meaning 'to show plainly,' 'to make to appear distinctly,' 'to put beyond question or doubt' — comes from the Latin *manifestare* which was originally taken from *manus*, hand, and *fendere*, to seize; *fur manifestus* meant 'a thief caught in the act.' This word, then, referred originally to the most basic of our external senses: to touch, and to the palpable.

4. *The relevance of names signifying things first known to us*

Many of the so-called technical terms of philosophy look forbidding (if not pedantic) because they are borrowed from another language, like the word 'philosophy' itself. And they appear all the more remote because they are usually taken according to later, more abstract impositions which had become theirs in that language. Such is the case with the words 'syllogism' and 'abstraction,' for example. Even in Latin, the adverb *sylogistice* (used by Cicero), or the Low Latin noun *sylogismus*, refer immediately to an extended meaning of the Greek *συλλογισμός* used by Aristotle in logic. The word derives from *συν* (with, together) and *λογίζομαι* (to count, to calculate, and finally, to reason). So, in Latin, French, and English dictionaries, the very first meaning of 'syllogism' is 'a term of logic,' and reference is made to Aristotle. Actually, the word was once used by the man in the street who knew nothing about its extended meaning, and he would have been puzzled if told that the 'syllogism' was the invention, or discovery, of the founder of the Lyceum — as we are at times led to believe. Yet the passage from the meaning of the word in common use to its extended meaning can be followed as easily as the transition from 'light,' as in 'sunlight,' to 'enlighten,' as in 'enlighten me on this subject of geometry.' Both in French and in English, the disparaging remark 'What does reasoning have to do with syllogisms?' may well draw applause from the gallery. Such a reaction is only natural when the borrowed term is used outright to signify something which, without reference to something more known or more knowable to us, can be understood only with difficulty, or not at all. Such a reference must be provided either by an earlier imposition, or, if they are not the same, by the etymology which helps us to grasp that previous meaning. Failing this verification, such so-called technical terms take on an air of fraudulence which calls for exposure so long as one is presumed to know just what they mean.

The same holds for the word 'abstraction.' Both in French and in English it means, first and immediately, something far removed from what is more known to us : viz., a certain operation of the mind, or the status of something related to thought as distinguished from mere sensation. The original Latin (just like the Greek ἀφαίρεσις) conveyed 'the act of drawing or separating from,' a meaning very near to the etymology : *ab*, *abs* (from) and *trahere* (to draw, pull, take away). The sculptor, hewing away stone from stone, performs an abstraction in that primitive sense of the word. (This meaning was retained in the English adjective 'abstract,' but is now archaic.) Present-day discussions on the nature of abstraction show how bewildering are the consequences of using words intended to mean, from the first, something which can be properly known only by dependence upon something of which we are immediately aware.

The need to lead extended meanings back to those that can be verified of things more known and unquestioned would not arise if, with Descartes, we could assume that what is most knowable in itself can be equated with what is most knowable to us — which is indeed the case in mathematics. To him, the words 'God' and 'soul' meant something first and most clearly known to us by intuition.¹ He believed that he was using the word 'soul' according to the sense in which Aristotle uses the word ψυχή (originally 'breath of life') in Book III of *De Anima*, i. e., intellective soul. We do not mean that Descartes had nothing in mind when he used this word, but only that he nowhere provided a means of verification. Nor would he need to do so if we enjoyed the kind of intuitions with which he credits us.² Actually, many later impositions of words depend upon a process of reasoning based, in the last resort, upon sense experience. For we can name things only insofar as we know them. Hence the very words we use to signify things that we can never know except by discourse, could not otherwise obtain such a particular meaning for us. Any statement containing, for instance, the word 'soul,' taken in a sense far removed from experience, yet with the assumption that this could, or should be its first imposition — like that of words for things immediately known, such as *hot*, *white*, *breath* — is going to be like any other enunciation made in terms not sufficiently grasped by its author. The neglect of primitive meanings opens the way to a philosophical jargon that all can repeat but no one understands.

5. *Philosophical terminology*

It has been observed that the original meanings of words have to do with things of rudimentary sense experience and practical life.

1. *Discours de la méthode*, part. IV ; also *Méditation II*.

2. Note that we are not speaking of propositions, but simply of the meaning of the words.

For instance, the Greek for 'soul' ($\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$, whence our psyche, psychic, psychology, psychiatry, etc.) first meant the *breath of life* ; while the Latin *anima* was used for *air, a current of air, a breeze* ; and we saw that the adjective 'manifest' meant *seized by the hand*. For this reason, many believe that to recognize the simplest words of common speech (although the whole of Aristotle's vocabulary, however awesome it may have come to look in modern languages, was derived from them) as relevant to philosophy, is to condemn the latter as a science and abandon it to anthropomorphism. This is a denial of the progress of knowledge from more to less known. Rather than surrender to words in common use, some suggest that the philosopher should create his own vocabulary, out of nothing, so to speak, and employ only 'technical' terms divorced from usual meanings ; much as the mathematical physicist, who must have recourse to symbols from the very start.

If this position were correct, it would imply that philosophy is a body of knowledge unrelated to what is actually more known to us ; that it is based, perhaps, on some intuitions that are the privilege of a few, the only ones to have the right of calling themselves philosophers ; or that the science is based on intuitions proper to some particular school. In effect, the reason why one does not understand the technical terms would be the lack of the proper intuitions. This position, which is rather widely held, implies that progress from the more commonly known to the less known, as well as the new impositions of words that attend it, cannot be achieved. Thus a word whose more original meaning referred to something practical, like 'manifest', *to seize with the hand*, could never be used to signify, in a proper sense, anything but that ; or even 'symbol,' which meant the sign of a convention or contract, such as a wedding-ring, could not be reasonably extended to mean the sign of a collection that cannot be named.¹ So that once a word has been used to refer to something in the order of sensation or in that of action or of making, it should never be employed to mean anything else in any proper sense. If such were the case, we admit that philosophy could not name anything. And the reason is that there would be nothing known to require a name.

V. A NEW IMPOSITION OF THE NAME ' MATTER '

What is meant by 'matter' in the statement that a thing is intelligible in act only insofar as it is abstracted from matter ? (We will pay no attention for the moment to what 'intelligible in act' may mean). It is also said that a thing is knowable only by reason of its 'form.' In treatises of philosophy these terms are often used with-

1. ST. THOMAS, *IIa IIae*, q.1, a.9.

out apology in a sense far removed from the meaning we know best. Let us here try to identify their meaning by taking an example from something well known, which leads us to a primitive meaning of 'matter,' viz., timber, the stuff that is used to make houses, tables, broomsticks, etc. 'Form,' on the other hand, originally meant the contour, shape or figure of a thing, e.g., the form of a bowling-pin.¹

1. 'Matter' as a connotative term

'Timber' happens to be a good example of a connotative term, since it does not mean just wood, but wood with reference to something to be made of it. Now, none of the class of things that are made of wood will be sufficiently described by 'made of wood' or 'wooden,' since a table, an oar, a toothpick or a house may all be equally wooden. They are distinguished by their shape or the arrangement of their parts, i.e., by their form. With respect to all these kinds of wooden objects, timber is a material still to be formed; and it is only when the timber is 'that of which this kind of thing is made,' or when the timber has taken on such a shape, that we have 'that for the sake of which' timber is. If this should be a table, it will not be primarily because it is made of wood — for it might still be a table even if made of metal or plastic — but primarily by reason of its shape or the disposition of its parts. In short, it is by reason of its form that this object is identified as a table and distinguishable from a bowling-pin.

2. Shape or form and matter are both principles of differences

At first sight, it might appear that, since a bowling-pin differs from a broomstick by its shape, we may, in defining or describing it, ignore the matter and give our attention only to the form. It is clearly the form of the bowling-pins which explains how they can be put up and knocked down in such a fashion as to make sport for the players. Yet, it should also be clear that we cannot afford to neglect the matter. The material must be wood or something like it.

Of wooden objects, the form is the principle of difference. Yet, when we want to distinguish wooden from non-wooden objects, we see that the matter too is a differentiating principle, though not at all in the same respect. That which a thing is made of is essential to it as the subject of the form; since the thing could not be what it is

1. The emphasis which we are placing upon the original meaning of a word is not intended to suggest that this same meaning is to be identified with its subsequent uses; but rather that to neglect original meanings entirely could lead to confusion with respect to later meanings. Etymology, in the historical and philological sense, can be the key to more abstract meanings of the same word. The principle involved is that even today, a word must be made to refer first of all to something more known to us, before we apply it to something less known. We always have to know what we are talking about.

without some kind of subject. Plainly, then, from the definition of bowling-pin matter may not be excluded. The matter that is thus part of the definition is called 'part of the species,' i.e., part of the kind of thing we are speaking of.

Notice, however, that the matter we put into the definition is not the matter of *this* bowling-pin, but only the *kind* of matter that the whole set of pins is made of, viz., wood. 'Wood' is never '*this* wood.' If it were, the wood of *this* bowling-pin would be all the wood there is, and there could be no other wood nor any more bowling-pins. 'To be a bowling-pin' is not the same as 'to be *this* bowling-pin.' Bowling-pin can be said of any one, while *this* bowling-pin can be said of only one. Hence, when we say *what* an individual thing is, the *what* compares to the individual thing as form to matter. For example, when we call a certain tool a saw, 'saw' is to this single tool as form to matter. It should therefore be clear that even the matter which enters into the definition (as steel in the definition of saw) has the nature of form if related to a single specimen of the thing defined (as steel in general has the nature of form as regards this particular saw). Thus we have a new imposition of the words 'matter' and 'form.' To return to our bowling-pin, 'matter' now will be individual bowling-pins as instances of 'bowling-pin.' It is in this sense that 'rational' and 'irrational' are called the subjective parts or matter of the predicable universal 'animal.'

3. When 'matter' refers to a principle of sheer numerical difference

'Matter' is used in still another sense, this time as a principle of difference. The bowling-pins of our set all have the same shape and are made of the same material. The same definition applies to each one of them. Yet they differ numerically: *this* one *here*, is not *that* one *there*. How can we account for this purely numerical difference? Of course we might argue that *this* particular pin differs from the others because it has been placed at the apex of the triangular grouping. But this position does not alter its shape nor the stuff of which it is made, and any other pin might just as easily have been set in its place. In short, the fact that it is a bowling-pin does not require that it be *this* one, *here* and *now* at the apex of the triangle; in other words, no amount of description of *this* bowling-pin considered by itself can account for its distinction from the others. When we identify it as the one closest to the player, we say nothing of what it is in itself. The shape and material that enter into the definition of bowling-pin do not account for *this* particular one qua *this*. 'That which' we define (the *definitum*), as well as the definition itself, can be said or predicated of any particular bowling-pin, and any and every pin is a *this*; yet both *definitum* and definition 'abstract' from each and every individual bowling-pin as a *this*.

4. 'Matter' as a principle of sheer numerical difference
must imply 'amount' of matter

Although apparently not differentiated in shape, size, and type of matter, our bowling-pins are actually not so much the same. Actual measurement would show them not exactly the same in form and size, and careful analysis would be sure to find structural differences in the grain of the wood, and even between its individual cells. But none of this expert information is needed to realize that *this* pin is not *that* one. And even if we did take into account the hidden differences in these pieces of wood, cut from the same tree, we would never hold such differences to be the reason why *this* pin is not *that* one. We are never going to maintain that, if the pins were actually as similar as circles of the same radius, they would lapse into a single pin ; or that, if all electrons were quite equal in charge — a basic supposition of the physicist — there could be only a single one. And even though we did grant of real objects, that any single thing in the real universe, or any single part of such a thing, must differ from every other single thing or part of such a thing by reason of the 'what it is' expressed in its definition, we would still be left with those individual circles of equal radius that are used in Geometry. They give rise to much the same problem.

Perhaps we can narrow down the problem by asking why it is that we can have a whole set, and even many sets of wooden bowling-pins, apparently all the same so far as the maker and user of them are concerned. The answer might simply be 'because we have enough of the right kind of wood — and we could have as many as you please, so long as there is the wood to make them.' This seems to place the burden of sheer multiplication of individuals upon the stuff that our bowling-pins are made of, upon their matter. Yet not on the wood alone, but upon the *amount* of it ; or, to put it otherwise : upon how much wood there is available. Whatever that *amount* is, it must be an amount of *wood*. The same amount of water would not do. Nor can the amount or quantity be indeterminate when we realize that the size of each of our pins is the same. The same problem arises concerning the many, when these are the same size : how can they be many while similar in every other respect ? ¹ Size will distinguish one pin

1. At this point some reader may begin to wonder what it can matter, since we know that there are such individual things ; and so to conclude that the whole problem had better be thrown out. But this will be like arguing : who cares what horses are, so long as we know that they exist ? and, if they truly exist, why question their possibility ? It has been maintained that the principle of individuation is precisely that incommunicable existence realized only in the individual. Now, we do not question the fact that only singulars exist in reality. Our problem concerns a special type of real individuals, those all of one kind. To assert that they are individuals because of their existence is like saying that they are apart because they are not together. What we want to know is simply this :

from the next no more effectively than shape, colour, or quality of wood. Or to put it in another way, the quantity or size of the pins calls for individuation no less than the wood of which it is the size. It is not "thirteen inches high" that makes it *this* pin, or even *this* height, for all the others are the same in this regard. It is not quantity as size that plays the essential role in individuation. A thing may have its own quantity for so long as it exists, and that same quantity may vary in size at different times. The dimensions of Socrates were his own throughout his life no matter how much they varied in size. This is what is meant by the distinction between quantity as *dividing*, and quantity as *informing, ordering* the parts of the whole and terminating it. It is the former that has to do with individuation.

3. *Things differing no more than by number are indefinable*

It is not our purpose to define here what the principle of individuation is. Our aim, for the moment, is merely to point out that things which are many, yet indistinguishable in kind, cannot be accounted for in their numerical distinction by defining or describing *what* they are. The reason for their distinction must be something other than what is expressed in a definition or a description. Whatever it may be, it has something to do with *this* matter of *this* quantity, something that can be designated in sensation, a something here and now. In other words, if an individual of a particular type can be neither defined nor described as an individual, the reason must be something extrinsic, foreign to what we can know of it by the definition or description; and it must be something irrational, since it allows a thing to be *this* without any discernible differentiation from *that*. In the definition of a bowling-pin, by itself, there is nothing to limit the number of individual pins; such a limit will be determined by the available wood and the powers of these craftsmen. Similarly, that the individuating principle is something irrational is clear because none of these individual things can be known to us except in the act of sensation. It can be true to say "this is a bowling-pin," and truth is in the intellect; but

how can they be distinct in existence when in every other respect, they are the same? The answer "Because they exist distinct from one another" is something we already know. Some have also held that the principle of individuation is precisely the "thisness" of the thing that is "this." But such a reply merely indicates what the question is about, leaving us still with the task of discovering what gives rise to it. To say that a thing is "this" because of its thisness is pretty much the same as saying that a horse is a horse because of its "horseness," and does not help much if our aim is to learn something about horses. We have still got to find out what "horseness" is, and no amount of mere designation can shed any light on the matter. This kind of verbalism became popular and was made fun of by Montaigne, when he had the doctors pronounce that opium causes sleep "because there is in it a sleep-inducing power whose nature it is to dull the senses — *opium facit dormire quia in eo virtus dormitionis cupus est natura sensus assupire*."

intellect does not hold this truth, except with reference to the thing actually sensed.

The act of reason alone, apart from sensation, does not attain to *this* thing here. Of course we know this kind of truth by our intellect — e.g., that this object is a man — but only with dependence on a particular sensation here and now. However, this truth is not attained by the kind of knowledge which proceeds by way of definition and demonstration : it is not reached by science, if the term science is taken strictly. While whatever is true of man can always be said of *this* man, the truth of 'this man is mortal' depends upon an act of sensation. Such a proposition of course adds nothing to science, even though science can exist only in individual men, and they alone can contribute to it.

6. *In what sense science cannot be concerned with the individual*

The doctrine that science cannot be concerned with the individual is frequently misunderstood and interpreted as haughty indifference to reality. Small wonder if the reader's indignation is aroused when he learns that he is of no interest to science unless, for example, he displays some exceptional endowment, or even disease ; and that even this distinction is merely incidental to him, since anybody else with the same peculiarity would do just as well. But the point is that speculative science does not pretend to replace every kind of knowledge. It is only one kind — that which is pursued for the sake of knowing, insofar as 'to know' can be sought for its own sake. And it remains true not only that the individual of sensation lies at the source of all knowledge, even of the most abstract, but also that science can never be indifferent to the qualitative varieties between individuals. Unless we know that human nature can assume widely different types, we know it very imperfectly indeed. When it is asserted that the individual is of no concern to science, the meaning is merely that the same thing over and over is of no concern to science ; while this individual, this duplicate of his fellow, remains of the first importance in the domain of action.¹

1. The doctrine applies with equal truth to emperor and clown. For as soon as we realize that the emperor could have been another man, indistinguishable in character, ability and motives, so that the substitution of one for the other would leave the course of history unaltered, we see that the actual historical personage is unique only as a matter of bare fact. His case is comparable to that of a given equilateral triangle, let us say, compared to another exactly like it. To argue that the perfection of speculative science is to be sought in such knowledge of the individual would be like holding that the aim of geometry is to contemplate, one after the other, all possible equilateral triangles of one size. There could be no end to this sort of thing. Wherever it began, and in whatever direction it proceeded, science could meet with nothing but frustration. To put the same idea in different words, the mere individual can never be pinned down except by designation through an act of the senses — *this, here and now*. No amount of description ever touches

Such is the 'individual matter' that science abstracts from, and which cannot be its subject, though the subject can be said of any individual of its kind. Of course, individuals are *used* in the study of nature, and the more one wishes to learn about man, the more one must turn to individuals. Yet while learning from them, they themselves are not 'what' is learned from them. Because of the real existence of *this* or *that* individual, we know that 'man' exists in the sense of being true; but from true propositions about man — e.g., that man is mortal — we cannot infer the existence of an individual, like Socrates, who can be known only through an actual sensation, or through the report of such an awareness. — It is in a somewhat similar way that we imagine and use a particular straight line, designated by 'AB,' to demonstrate by way of a construction that there actually is a kind of triangle whose sides are equal. Yet, from the existence of that kind of triangle — 'existence' being taken here in the sense of truth — we cannot infer that such a triangle exists in the way that Socrates does.

VI. 'A THING BECOMES INTELLIGIBLE IN ACT INsofar AS IT IS
SOMEHOW ABSTRACTED FROM MATTER'

1. *An illustration of what it is to make something intelligible in act*

What do we mean by 'intelligible in act'? It is by making them actual that geometrical constructions are discovered, e.g., by actually dividing or protracting a line which was only potentially divided or protracted.

If the figures had been already divided, the constructions would have been obvious; but as it is they are present only potentially. Why are the angles of the triangle equal to two right angles? Because the angles about one point are equal to two right angles. If, then, the line parallel to the side had been already drawn upwards, the reason would have been evident to any one as soon as he saw the figure.¹

In other words, it is by making actual that which was only potential, that we come to know it. And the reason is that thinking is an actuality. We would never know this property of the triangle if its base were not actually protracted.

the individual. To assume that it can is to assume that there could never possibly be another like this one. As we describe Alexander the Great in all that made him different from every other figure of history, we might still be talking about somebody else. And this is what is meant by the statement that the individual is ineffable: all that can be done is to point him out.

1. ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.*, IX, chap.9, 1051 a 23.

The instance of a geometrical construction was chosen because it is more obviously a case of making something actually knowable than will be any example of the kind of actualisation which we perform when we make the things of sensation intelligible in act.

2. *The sheer individual cannot be rendered intelligible
in act qua individual*

If by 'intellect' we mean the power of our mind to define and to demonstrate, and by 'intelligible,' that about which there can be such an activity, then, as we have already pointed out, the individuals of sensation cannot be attained by the intellect directly, but only with reference to sensation of a *this, here and now*.¹ But how do we get hold of that which the intellect properly attains, and about which there is demonstration? It is enough to realize, here, that we do form propositions like 'Socrates is a man,' 'Plato is a man,' and that, while the subjects of these propositions stand for different individuals, their predicate is common, signifying one and the same kind of thing attributed to both subjects in the same way. Neither this individual, Socrates, nor that one, Plato, can be said of anything else, whereas 'man' can be said of every individual man. Now we can define man and describe him in such a way as to set him apart from any other kind of thing. But, as we saw, we could not do as much for the individual thing attainable only by the designation *this, here and now*. We can say *what* this individual is, namely, 'a man,' or 'the kind of animal that makes automobiles, constructs theories about the universe,' and so forth; but it remains clear that 'what it is to be a man' is not the same as 'to be *this* man.' To put the thing a little differently, when speaking of this individual thing, we have got to distinguish between '*what kind*,' meaning of what it is an instance, and 'which one,' meaning which instance of it this is. Only the *kind* of thing it is is definable, and demonstration can concern only the *kind* of thing it is. That is what we mean by saying that 'man' is 'intelligible in act,' whereas Socrates is not. There is no science about 'what it is to be this individual who is Socrates.'

There remains of course a sense in which the individual is a remote principle of science, viz., in the enumeration of particular instances leading by induction to a universal. But note, again, that even here any one of these individuals might have been replaced by another. There is also the sense in which individuals of the same kind may be severally a term of the science, viz., when we apply what is scientifically

1. The question of the distinction between intellect and sense: whether they are distinct faculties, or constitute one and the same power of knowledge, does not concern us here. It is enough, for the moment, to recognize that to know what a thing is, even if only confusedly, to define it or to prove something about it, are not the same kind of activity as to feel warm or cold, to see red, to hear a noise, and so on.

known to *this* that we designate in sensation (the universality of the demonstration implies that such an application must be valid).¹ But what can never be is a science having Socrates as its proper subject ; for, if such a science could exist, ' what it is to be this *kind* of individual ' and ' to be *this* man Socrates ' would have to be utterly identical, so that nothing else could be an individual of his kind. Further, ' what the science is about ' would be in every respect as variable, as contingent, as what we know in actual sensation ; in other words, ' what it is to be a man of this kind ' could have existence, in the sense of truth, only so long as Socrates himself existed, and only for so long as we had actual sensation of him — whether he really continued to be or not.

3. *Knowledge of the individual could not be the aim of speculative science*

Again, if ' to know ' is that for the sake of which this kind of science is pursued — as distinguished from knowledge sought for the purpose of learning how to make something, or how to behave — and if, at the same time, the essential function of the science were to apply what is known to this individual and that, of the same kind, then the aim of such science could be achieved only through a process of designating successively and unceasingly, not merely distinct individuals of the same kind, but even the very same individual, over and over again ; for, this individual thing is knowable *qua this, here and now*, only for so long as it exists, and could be known in this manner only for so long as we would be in the act of designating it — a process which must be constantly renewed, subject as it is to the passage of time. In short, ' this thing here and now,' owing its individuation to the kind of principle pointed out above, can never possess the intelligibility and necessity essential to the subject and principles of science in the strict sense of the word.

The individual is to the true subject of science as the potential to the actual ; and even when it is spoken of as ' made intelligible in act ' the meaning is not that the individual can be rendered intelligible in act *qua* individual. It is not *this* thing *qua this* that our mind makes to be intelligible ; it is only ' *what* it is an instance of ' — that which it has in common with things the same as itself — that can be actualised and understood. It is the ' *what* ' of *this*, and not the *this, here and now*, that is called actually intelligible.

4. *The contingency of the individual is another reason why there can be no science of it*

Still another aspect of the potentiality that keeps the individual beyond the immediate grasp of science is revealed when we consider

1. ST. THOMAS, *In Boethium de Trinitate*, q.5, a.2.

that Socrates may now stand, then be seated, or even cease to be at all, without affecting the ' what it is to be a man ' which is the concern of science. Change affecting individuals does not oblige the notion of change to change. Even when science is about what is variable or what ceases to be altogether, ' what it is to be variable ' or ' what variation is, ' remains invariable. Thus, ' what movement is ' is not in movement, and ' what it is to be contingent ' is not contingent : the right definitions of movement and contingency are changeless and necessary — unless we hold that all attempts at definition are equally good, or that things are as anyone chooses to have them. It may be objected that, in the pursuit of science about nature, most definitions are provisional and subject to revision ; but this is only because they belong to an order of research in which we ourselves are subject to change and contingency. It goes without saying that to be on the way towards a goal is not the same as to have already reached that goal ; but, if there were no goal, the pursuit of it would be meaningless. Nor are the things that we try to know in a scientific way other than they are when we do not know them ; nor do they cease to be what they are when we do not actually consider them. The one who possesses scientific knowledge may be subject to change, he may forget, or die, but the mutability of the scientist does not destroy the subject of the science and its properties.

5. *The ultimate aim of the science of nature cannot be to know
this universe qua " this," but to know
what it is in kind*

In conclusion, the science of nature cannot be science about this universe of ours qua *this*. The physicist assumes that the laws governing the universe, which he seeks to know by gradual approximation, progressing by hypotheses and provisional theory, would apply in every universe of the same kind as ours. So far as science is concerned, there might be another universe, governed by the same laws, quite indistinguishable from the present one in every respect. The only difference would be one of number. The numerical difference we can bring home to ourselves by reflecting that *this* universe is the one that we are alive in ; we feel ourselves alive in it when we touch, taste, smell, hear or see, conscious of this awareness, *here* and *now*. For no one else can be myself, no matter how like me in every respect. Similarly, although another universe can be wholly like the present one, none can be *this* one, since our incommunicable selves are part of it qua *this* universe (even though we, as *these* individuals, are not part of it as to its kind). *This* universe of ours is a matter of history, not of the kind of science we are invited to study here.

... In all formations and products whether of nature or of art we can distinguish the shape in itself and the shape in combination with matter.

For instance the form of the sphere is one thing and the gold or bronze sphere another ; the shape of the circle again is one thing, the bronze or wooden circle another. For when, of sphere or circle, we state ' what it is ' we do not include in the definition gold or bronze, because they do not belong to what those things are, but if we are speaking of the copper or gold sphere we do include them. We still make the distinction even if we cannot conceive or apprehend any other example beside the particular thing. This may, of course, sometimes be the case : it might be, for instance, that only one circle could be found ; yet nonetheless the difference will remain between the being of circle and of this particular circle, the one being form, the other form in matter, i.e. a singular. Now since the universe is perceptible it must be regarded as a singular ; for everything that is perceptible subsists, as we know, in matter. But if it is a singular, there will be a distinction between the being of ' this universe ' and of ' universe ' unqualified. There is a difference, then, between ' this universe ' and simply, ' universe ' ; . . ."¹

6. *A new imposition of the name matter,
to signify a part of the definition of natural things,
viz., "sensible matter"*

To return to our old example, the name ' bowling-pin ' can be accounted for by pointing out this particular bowling-pin. But if we are asked ' what a bowling-pin is,' it will not be enough merely to state its purpose and describe its form ; we shall also have to show ' what it is made of.' A bowling-pin, of course, is only an artifact, but the things that surround us in nature are like it in this respect : the matter or ' what they are made of ' should enter into their definition. No man is a man without bone, muscle and nerve of some special quality, arranged in some manner peculiar to man. ' What it is to be a man ' is not indifferent to the kind of matter that belongs to what he is.

So bone, muscle and nerve, the matter of man, must be considered by any genuine science of man. It should be clear, however, that this does not mean the bone, muscle and nerve of Socrates the individual, although our scientific findings are going to apply to his matter truly enough. What science does, then, is to abstract from individual sensible matter, but not from common sensible matter. But now a question arises : if science abstracts from the individual sensible matter attained in sensation, why, in speaking of the bones and flesh that are essential to man as such considered apart from this or that particular man, do we still use the qualification ' sensible ' ? The matter that enters into the definition cannot possibly fall under the senses as does that of Socrates ; bones and flesh, when they are those of ' man ' as defined by science, produce no alteration in the

1. ARISTOTLE, *De Coelo*, I, chap.8, 277 b 30. (ST. THOMAS, *ibid.*, lect.19).

senses. Why, then, retain the adjective *sensible* to describe an abstract matter which cannot be actually sensed?

Philosophies of experimental science are so distrustful of our senses in the study of nature that they are quick to make objections to the argument that sensible matter must be included in scientific definitions. Some of these objections must be faced now, even though this will oblige us to anticipate a few points of doctrine to be made later, *ex professo*, in that part of natural science which is studied in the treatise *On the Soul*. The need to explain what is meant by the archaic phrase 'common sensible matter' might perhaps be made to seem less acute by substituting for it the more conveniently vague and non-committal 'reference to sense-experience.' But this would merely be to evade a problem basic to an understanding of what natural science is about in each and everyone of its parts. Moreover, in our day, we have an obvious reason for continuing to use the old, candid and exact expression, a reason better than any the ancient philosophers could have dreamt of. The present knowledge of anatomy, physiology and, more especially, of the chemistry and physics these involve, have made us realize that the very organs of our senses can never be described adequately in terms of what we know first in sensation. Knowledge of the ultimate constituents of these organs, whatever they may be, would presumably lead us far away from anything that can be rendered in terms of sensible qualities like hard and soft, wet and dry, warm and cold, or in terms of taste, smell, sound and colour. So it is more important than it ever was to bear in mind that these sensible qualities are what we know first and best and that, no matter how far investigation may lead us away from this familiar realm, it continues to be the indispensable starting-point of all our knowledge about nature, and one to which we must always return. Unless anchored in sense experience, the study of nature can never keep to the right track, nor lead towards the truth.

If such a beginning and end in sensation are necessary, and if it is the 'sensible individual' matter that this science must abstract from while not abstracting from the 'sensible matter' that enters into the definition of natural things, we will first have to look more closely into what is meant by 'sensible' in this context.

7. '*To be sensed*' is not a property of sensible things

It is sometimes assumed, quite wrongly, that to call an object sensible is to assert its 'sensibility in act' as a property really inherent in it. But 'to be sensed' or 'to be sensible in act,' when applied to the things of nature, is manifestly a mere extrinsic denomination borrowed from the sense faculty of the animal. Things that we sense do not depend upon sensation to be what they are; even if there were no faculty to sense them, they would hold themselves unchanged. 'To

be actually sensed ' cannot alter the state of the thing that produces the sensation, except incidentally, as when the temperature of my hand affects the temperature of the thing I touch. This sort of alteration is not sensation, and a piece of inorganic matter, if brought into contact with the object, could produce the same result.

The act of that which is sensible in act, as such, can only be in the sense. If ' to be actually sensed ' were something of the object sensed, no object could be what it is unless actually sensed ; so that if there were no animal to sense it, a thing could not exist nor be what it is in itself. Further, since the actuality of being sensed is essentially in the knower, ' to be sensible in act in itself ' would imply that the thing must be in the act of sensing itself. To put it still another way : to be sensed, the thing that we sense must have an actuality of its own, but this actuality that it has apart from the knower and because of which it acts upon the sense, can hardly be the actuality of being sensed. The actuality of what is sensible in act arises in the knower and can in no way be said of the external agent that produces it ; nor is this actuality one in nature with the actuality that produces it.

... The view that [if there were no faculty of sense] neither the sensible qualities nor the sensations would exist is doubtless true (for they are affections of the perceiver), but that the substrata which cause the sensation should not exist even apart from sensation is impossible. For sensation is surely not sensation of itself, but there is something beyond the sensation ; for that which moves is prior in nature to that which is moved, and if they are correlative terms, this is no less the case.¹

When ' sensible ' and ' sense ' are said to be correlatives, the true reason for referring the one to the other is to be found on the part of the sense-faculty : the thing is called sensible because the sense refers to it.²

Hence the matter in our definitions of natural things is called sensible inasmuch as it may cause sensation, not because it is sensed. This shows, too, that the sensible matter of definitions is not confined to those things of which we can have an actual sensation, like a tree. Anything that is one in genus with what we can actually sense will be defined as made of sensible matter. When we call bones and flesh sensible matter, we make this denomination with reference to the sense faculty that is its foundation. And while it is true to say that things external to the percipient are sensible in potency, this potency is not to be understood as one that can be brought to an actuality inherent in what is sensible in potency. The actuality of the potentially sensible is still what it is even if, *per impossibile*, there could be no sensation.³

1. ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.* IV, chap.5, 1010 b 30. ST. THOMAS, lect.14, nn.706-707. Cf. *De Anima*, III, chap.2. (ST. THOMAS, lect. 2, nn. 596-597.)

2. ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.*, V, chap.15, 1021 b. (ST. THOMAS, lect.17, nn. 1026-1029.)

3. ST. THOMAS, *In IV Physic.*, lect. 23, n.5.

But there is more to it than this. If by 'sensible matter' we meant something that can be a *per se* object of sense, like warmth, colour, shape or size, then sensible matter, for example, bone and flesh, would not be sensible at all and, if it were, it would not be 'matter'. To show how this is true, we will have to distinguish the various realities which may be called sensible.

VII. THE DIVISION OF WHAT IS CALLED 'SENSIBLE'

Aristotle, in the *De Anima*, presents the following division :

In dealing with each of the senses we shall have first to speak of the objects which are perceptible by each. The term 'object of sense' covers three kinds of objects, two kinds of which are, in our language, directly perceptible, while the remaining one is only incidentally perceptible. Of the first two kinds one [a] consists of what is perceptible by a single sense, the other [b] of what is perceptible by any and all of the senses. I call by the name of proper object of this or that sense that which cannot be perceived by any other sense than one and in respect of which no error is possible ; in this sense colour is the proper object of sight, sound of hearing, flavour of taste. Touch, indeed, discriminates more than one set of different qualities. Each sense has one kind of object which it discerns, and never errs in reporting that which is before it is colour or sound (though it may err as to what it is that is coloured or where that is, or what it is that is sounding or where that is). Such objects are what we propose to call the proper objects of this or that sense.

'Common sensibles' are movement, rest, number, figure, magnitude ; these are not peculiar to any one sense, but are common to all. There are at any rate certain kinds of movement which are perceptible both by touch and by sight.

We speak of an incidental object of sense where, e.g., the white object which we see is the son of Diaries ; here, because 'being the son of Diaries' is incidental to the directly visible white patch, we speak of the son of Diaries as being (incidentally) perceived or seen by us. Because this is only incidentally an object of sense, it in no way as such affects the senses. Of the two former kinds, both of which are in their own nature perceptible by sense, the first kind — that of proper objects of the several senses — constitute *the* objects of sense in the strictest sense of the term and it is to them that in the nature of things the structure of each several sense is adapted.¹

1. *Special or Proper Sensibles*

We must observe that, when asked what is meant by 'warm,' we can only convey our meaning by inviting the questioner to share our experience of warmth. Actually we can do no more than interpret the word by designating an instance of a special object or proper

1. Bk.II, chap.6.

sensible ; in so doing, we refer to a particular kind of experience which the other must be able to share if he is to know what the word stands for. To a man born blind, it will never be possible to convey what is meant by the proper sensible 'colour.'

2. *Common sensibles do not have the ineffable immediacy
of the proper sensible, and are communicable*

'Common' does not mean that they can be perceived by each and every sense, but that they are not the exclusive object of one sense as colour is — though actually they appeal mainly to sight. Note that they are either quantity (like number and magnitude), modalities of quantity (figure, movement, rest), or reducible to quantity or to a modality of it (as time is to movement, and *situs*, i.e. position or order of parts in place, to external figure). The mind can collate and express them in terms of measure, without particular reference to a single kind of sensation. Even the person born blind can know what is meant by 'three marbles,' viz., their shape, size and number. Though blind and deaf, he might be led to an understanding of a phrase like 'the clatter of three, green, cold marbles,' without reference even to the feeling of cold. For, if by 'clatter' is meant the measurable intensity of a certain kind of vibration ; by 'green' a colour defined, not with reference to sight, but to the angle of refraction in a prism ; and by cold that which is expressed on a thermometer ; all these — clatter, green, cold — could be conveyed to him by mere resistance to his touch. It is upon such a basis that mathematical physics proceeds.

Later philosophers called the proper sensibles 'secondary qualities,' and the common sensibles 'primary qualities.' Part of the reason may be that quantity is more basic than quality, inasmuch as a certain division or extension are presupposed to anything that is a proper sensible, as number to octave, or surface to colour. But while this may explain why the common sensibles came to be judged primary, it does not explain how they can be called qualities. Figure is, indeed, a quality of a quantity ; but number and magnitude are quantities pure and simple. That is why we prefer the old division in terms of 'sensibles,' allowing as it does for both quality and quantity. But there can be no objection to qualifying the proper sensibles as secondary qualities, provided it be remembered that they are primary in the order of perception, since we cannot perceive a common sensible independently of some proper sensible. By this I mean that, when seeing the size of something, I perceive it through seeing something coloured ; or when feeling the size, I perceive it because of some resistance to the touch. This dependence in perception of the common sensibles upon the proper is perhaps being acknowledged when the former are called, not merely primary, but primary qualities.

3. Sensible "*per accidens*"

There are two basically different ways in which anything can be sensed *per accidens*.

(i) The *per se* object of one sense may be a *per accidens* sensible with respect to another sense, as when sweetness is called visible inasmuch as a white thing may in fact be sweet, the sweetness being *per se* perceptible to taste ; or when the cube, whose shape is a common sensible, is called sweet. An object, incidentally sensible in this manner, remains within the domain of what is sensible *per se*.

(ii) 'To be a sense object *per accidens*' can also mean something quite different. It may be observed, for instance, that Socrates is a *per accidens* sense object, whereas his whiteness or his figure are *per se* sensible. It is *per accidens* that the white thing, sensed *per se* as white, should be a man. For white man does not act upon the sense *qua* man, but *qua* white. 'Incidentally' or *per accidens* qualifies the connection between what is *per se* sensible and what is not so to the sense itself. So far as the sense faculties are concerned, any other white thing, though not a man, would act upon the same sense in the same way. Socrates does not act upon or modify the sense of sight by being a man, but by being of such a colour. Yet, if Socrates is to be called sensible *per accidens*, he himself must be perceived somehow by the one who is sensing. If he were connected with the object that is *per se* sensible without himself being perceived, he could not be said to be sensed *per accidens*.

So, when someone says 'I met Socrates this morning, and he talked to me,' he means that he actually met the man named Socrates and heard *him* talk ; not merely that he perceived a colour pattern and heard a series of sounds, nor that what he met was only incidentally Socrates. And this implies that, while not perceived *per se* by any of the senses, Socrates is known *per se* nevertheless by the one who senses ; though not sensed *per se*, Socrates is yet somehow apprehended *per se* by the one who senses him *per accidens*.

It does not follow, however, that anything thus knowable *per se* should be called incidentally sensible, but only that which is at once apprehended so soon as a *per se* sense experience occurs. Thus, as soon as I see anyone talking or moving himself, my mind perceives him as living, and I can say that I see him live. This shows us that 'to know' or 'to apprehend' does not always mean the same as to have an external sensation. That some faculty other than the external senses is coming into play here ought not to surprise us, realizing as we do that to understand his speech is not quite the same as to hear the sounds that convey what Socrates is talking about. But just what it is to know in this fashion, or what is the power or faculty of the mind by which we have such knowledge is not our immediate concern.

Knowledge of an incidentally sensible object of this kind must accompany every sensation, since all *per se* sensibles are at once perceived as belonging to something that is not *per se* sensed ; and this something, unlike the things we sense *per se*, is never attributable to anything else. When we see that Socrates is white, or hear him talking, we are aware that whiteness is in him, and talking one of his activities, but Socrates himself we do not attribute to anything else.

Notice also that, when it is asserted that Socrates is *per se* known to the mind and only *per accidens* to the senses, this should not be interpreted to mean that *per se* sensibles are only *per accidens* attained by mind. The mind extends *per se* both to what is *per se* sensible to the senses and to what is sensed by them *per accidens*, grasping both one and the other as connected *per se*, for it is not *per accidens* that Socrates has shape and colour. In a similar way the mind apprehends speech both as a series of sounds and as possessed of meaning.

4. *New imposition of the name 'subject' used with regard to what is sensible "per accidens"*

Observe that, in using the word 'subject' with reference to the thing incidentally sensed while apprehending what is *per se* sensible of the man Socrates, we imply a meaning that goes beyond the original and more known one exemplified by 'the floor beneath, and subject to, the table.' The new imposition would also apply to the wood that the bowling-pin is made of, as subject of its figure or form. In this second example, the word 'subject' is obviously not intended to suggest that the matter, viz. wood, is beneath or subjected to colour and figure in the same way in which the floor is beneath the table. The subject of the figure, colour, hardness of the bowling-pin is what we called its sensible matter, viz., the wood. Now, just as the wood, compared to all that is *per se* sensible in the bowling-pin, is the sensible matter of this object, so bones and flesh, compared to all that is *per se* sensible of Socrates, are his sensible matter, viz., the matter of the man as *per se* subject of whatever is known of him by sensation of quality, quantity and modes of quantity. It follows that what we call the sensible matter of Socrates, is sensible only in the manner that Socrates himself is, that is, *per accidens*. When we term his matter sensible, we do not imply that it is convertible with the subject in every respect, as if Socrates were no more than his sensible matter ; we mean Socrates precisely as the subject of what is *per se* sensible in him, and this subject will be that which, in him, is sensible *per accidens*.

Someone may suggest at this point that what we are calling sensible matter seems very like 'substance.' The term substance, however, has so many meanings, most of which are irrelevant to what is intended here, that we may avoid using it until we meet a problem requiring its explanation. For the present let it suffice that 'sensible matter'

refers to that which a thing is made of, like the wood of the bowling-pin, or the bones and flesh of man.

5. *Not every subject of "per se" sensible objects
is to be called sensible "per accidens"*

Note further that not everything having the nature of subject with regard to the *per se* sensible is therefore merely sensible *per accidens*. With respect to its colour, for example, the surface of the bowling-pin is a subject, and yet it is sensible *per se*. Sensible matter, on the other hand, is perceived as subject of each and all *per se* sensible objects. But this raises an obvious difficulty. If sensible matter is what a thing is made of, like wood, and if, in its turn, the wood which we designate by means of its qualities and structure is made of something else not called wood — the cells that the fibers are made of and the molecules making up the cells — which do we intend by 'sensible matter?' Here is a problem which would be quite insoluble if the reason for the qualification 'sensible' were forgotten.

The point is that, when we call wood 'sensible matter,' all that we do is to refer to a subject as apprehended in the act of sensing these qualities and structure which are our only means of identifying wood. We have no sense perception of the nature of wood, nor is there any question of an insight into 'what wood is' absolutely. To grant that we can be aware of sensible matter is not to grant more than this : first, that, in perceiving sensible objects, if we can distinguish one from another, in number or in kind, it can only be to the extent that differences in the *per se* sensible objects (like number or figure) may be signs of different subjects (as one man is distinct from another, or from a horse) ; secondly, that we never sense any object without being made aware of some background, incidentally sensible, about which we know only that it has shape, colour, resistance or absence of resistance, and so on. This is the only way in which the incidentally sensible is known while the act of sensation is going on. Even though we may call the matter wood, rather than glass, let us say, the name chosen does not — at least in the beginning — refer to what the nature of the matter is in itself. And when we learn that the wood is made of cells, the cells of molecules, and the molecules of electrical charges, we may qualify these as sensible matter, inasmuch as they are held to be constituents of what is primarily apprehended as sensible matter. For it is surely what we apprehend as wood, and so name, that is made up of those things.

6. *Sensible matter is only "per accidens" sensible*

This shows how important it is to find the reason why that which is known to us in sensation as matter must be termed sensible. Al-

though it must be maintained that sensible matter is known *per se* to the mind, and to the senses only incidentally, this should not be interpreted to mean that the mind thereby knows 'what the matter is' absolutely. When the physicist points to the atom as an instance of matter, and then proceeds to show that it is convertible into energy, hinting, finally, that perhaps there is no matter there at all, he does not use the word as we intend it in the phrase 'sensible matter.' Whether sensible matter turns out to be a swarm of electrical charges or not does not affect what we mean when naming it; bone and flesh are not less bone and flesh for having an inner structure far more intricate and hidden than was dreamed of when man first knew and named them. And to make reference to what is thus called sensible matter is absolutely necessary for, if this reference be withheld or denied, there will be no way of knowing whether what science is elaborating upon has anything at all to do with the reality first attained by us in sense experience.¹

VIII. THE TERMS OF THIS DIVISION IN POINT OF CERTITUDE

In one way or another, all our knowledge depends on the senses. It should also be clear that all the definitions of natural science — whether they are definitions in the strict sense or not — must be in terms of sensible matter. Nevertheless, the physicist in particular feels obliged, from the start, to exclude sense-impressions as leading to confusion. It seems our duty, therefore, to examine what our sense-impressions actually bring us, and in what measure they are to be trusted.

1. *Errors with regard to proper sensibles*

In the text quoted on page 169, Aristotle observed that the proper object of each sense is one about which there is no mistake, as sight is not mistaken about colour; hearing, about sound; taste, about flavour; whereas, concerning the common sensibles, error is normal, as when the size of the sun appears to be about that of a dinner-plate, or when touch reports two objects when we cross our fingers over a single marble. But in that department of natural science called mathematical physics, where only the measurable aspect of things is considered, and in which there is plainly more exactness, the proper sensibles seem to have lost their favoured position. For instance, this water may seem warm to my right hand but cold to my left. What is the water,

1. A further subject of investigation would be the relations between real things, and how these are known to us. We would find that, although their foundations may be sensible *per se*, the relations themselves are only sensible *per accidens*. But this is a question too involved for full discussion at this juncture.

then, warm or cold? The trouble is, of course, that my two hands were at very different temperatures when I plunged them into the water. But no such problem arises when a thermometer is used to measure the temperature. Even sight, a more detached sense, does not entirely escape such relativity: I have the impression that this surface is red, while another may see it as a shade of grey; and the surface which, to the naked eye, appears white becomes a shade of green when I wear green glasses. The first difference is explained, to some extent, when it is learned that the man who sees only a shade of grey is colour-blind; but the second example shows that any colour we spontaneously attribute to a thing may also have something to do with the structure of the normal organ of sight in such a way that we always misjudge when in an absolute way we attribute the colour as we see it, to the thing to which our sight refers us. This relativity of sensation is something from which there is no escape.

After remarking that "each particular sense can discern these proper objects without deception; thus sight errs not as to colour, nor hearing as to sound," Aristotle qualifies this statement by adding: "though it might err about *what* is coloured, or *where* it is, or what it is that is sounding or where it is." What is meant by this qualification St. Thomas explains when he distinguishes¹ between the sense as a *thing* reporting to the mind how it is *itself* affected, and that same sense as one thing indicating *another* thing; as 'I have a bitter taste in my mouth while eating this apple', as opposed to 'the apple has a bitter taste.' As a thing reporting on itself, the sense does not err; but when indicating something else it may be responsible for a mistaken judgment. One might object that the apple is actually sweet, but tastes bitter when the tongue is coated by illness. However, even when this difference in taste is accounted for by the unusual disposition of the organ — which gave rise to an incidental error concerning what the apple *normally* tastes like — we still deceive ourselves if we attribute the quality perceived as belonging to the other thing (the apple) in the way in which the sense reports it, even when normally disposed. Spontaneously we do believe that the taste of an apple is wholly in the apple; yet in believing this we go beyond what the sense reports as its own affection. In other words, if my judgment goes like this: 'I sense things *as if* the quality which I perceive were present in the thing itself as my sense refers to it,' then my judgment is unassailably true. And there is surely some quite determinate reason why the sense reports the other thing in that way. How the apple and my sense of taste contrive to produce this kind of sensation is not revealed in sensation. The knowledge which allows me to verify the word 'taste' throws no light on this.

1. *Q. D. de Veritate*, q.1, a.11.

No matter what the conditions of sensation may be, I cannot doubt, when I see a surface as green, that I truly see green, nor doubt that I see it as being in that surface. But whether it *is* there in the way in which my sight reports it is another matter. In fact, the more we learn about sensation the better we realize that qualities are not simply *there* as we sense them. But this does not change the really relevant fact that we do perceive qualities, that the perception of them is real, and that the term 'reality' refers first of all to the kind of being attained in actual and external sensation.

Hence it would be idle to suppose that the senses could be detached from things sensed to the point where they would be as faithful in reporting on these things as they are in reporting their own affections. To put such a demand upon them would destroy their very nature as senses inasmuch as some kind of physical union of the organ with the object, occurring in a way which sensation does not convey, is a prerequisite of sense knowledge. What and how the things which sense refers to are out there simply cannot be known by the senses themselves when, by their very nature, they are organic faculties, operating by, and inseparable from, instruments entitatively part of material reality.¹ Even the organ of our most detached external sense, sight, is being physically affected when we see. Not that the mere physical affection is the act of knowing, but the sensation cannot take place without it.

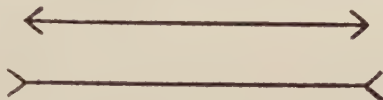
To put it briefly, error with regard to proper sensibles is incidental to them in two ways : (a) the typical examples are the colour-blind who believe that the way they see colours is the way in which all or most people see them ; or the sick, who attribute the bad taste to the food. Such errors consist in deciding what is normal by means of sense equipment that is abnormal, so that a difference which is only incidental is ascribed to the things the sense refers to. (b) When *any* quality is judged to belong to the thing indicated by the sense, as an absolute property of that thing in exactly the way the sense is affected by it.

Must we conclude from this that there is nothing in things themselves which could rightly be called sensible quality, or even, mere quality, to the point where the external cause of sensation would be of a different nature altogether, like quantity? We will come back to this question after discussing sensation with respect to certitude.

1. 'Organon' means tool or instrument. 'Organized body,' which the definition of the soul refers to, means a body equipped with tools, namely, physical instruments of the kind of operations which are characteristic of living beings in nature. ARISTOTLE, *De Anima*, II, chap.1, 412 b. Cf. CHARLES DE KONINCK, *Introduction à l'étude de l'âme*, dans *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 1947, Vol.III, n.1, pp.9 et sq.

2. *Error with regard to common sensibles*

Mistakes in judgment about the common sensibles are normal. The illusion illustrated here is a familiar example :



When two horizontal lines of equal length are made to terminate, one in arrow heads, the other in feather heads, the second will appear longer than the first. Of course, there is error only so long as we judge the things to be as they appear in sensation, and this example has exactly the value of that used by Aristotle, of the sun appearing to be only the size of a dinner-plate.

In our estimates of common sensibles we inevitably commit ourselves far more as to the status of the things 'out there,' although on the other hand, our mistaken judgment can be corrected by measurement. It is partly because of this possibility of verification by measure, that the common sensibles are accorded a more objective status than the proper ones. But it should be noted that the process of measuring involves a certain operation, namely, the collation and comparison of measure and measured, as in counting or in determining a length ; and that this operation is performed by the mind, though on the basis of, and together with, external sensation.

There is another way in which common sensibles lead to error in judgment. A process of mathematical abstraction is going on unceasingly as we receive perceptions of quantity and of quantitative modes. A line can be drawn so thin that it yields no distinct perception of width, and its parts in length are made to appear so fused that they give an impression of uninterrupted continuity. The result is that we assimilate the sensible line to the one generated in imagination by a point in motion. Both to touch and to sight the bowling-ball has the appearance of a true sphere. Actually, any visible or tangible line or sphere can offer no more than the appearance of true continuity and regularity. For it is only when we consider a line apart from any sensible example that we can be sure that it is a line ; and only when we consider a sphere apart from a sensible one can we know that it is a finite solid having every point on its surface equidistant from a point within called the center. When we project this exactness into the objects of sensation, we commit an error. It is only by prescinding from *per se* sensible objects that we achieve such rigour. To proceed as if ideal and real object were the same, as when a star is taken as a point, is an example of the kind of fiction needed by mathematical physics.

It is again a mistake to believe that proper sensibles can be expressed in terms of quantity or of quantitative modes, for example,

that the definition of a colour by its angle of refraction is a definition of colour as a proper sensible. If it were, we could know exactly what it is to perceive colour without possessing the power of vision at all.

3. *Errors with regard to the incidentally sensible*

Whenever sensation occurs, we also attain a *per accidens* sensible subject. Our natural inclination is to believe that this subject is just what it appears to be to the senses. An example, based on experience of certain qualities, would be the judgment that a certain liquid is honey, because it looks like honey, whereas actually it is bile. In this instance the error could be corrected by perception of some other sensible quality, like odour, or taste. Again, we distinguish the various kinds of animals, and of plants too, mainly by their difference in figure. Then we take the further step of thinking that difference in figure is identical with the difference that makes this thing to be the kind of thing it is, whereas figure is only an external sign (in plants and in animals a fairly proximate one, to be sure) of difference in kind.

As regards quantity, errors concerning the subject are also very frequent. It is easy to fall into the habit of thinking that a fluid, like water, is a continuous homogeneous mass, comparable to the three-dimensional continuum of geometry, so that no matter how long we might keep on halving it, we would always have water. The sun appears to revolve around the earth. The propagation of light seems instantaneous. Misjudgments like these concerning the subject of the common sensibles are so natural that scientific correction of them is of recent date, and the means of correction remain very remote from direct sense-perception.

But the thing to notice is that the difference in subject is always grasped at indirectly, through differences in what is *per se* sensible. Our judgment in all such cases would be quite correct if it confined itself to what appears to be. It is true that to sight this fluid appears to be honey. It is true that the body of water appears to be a continuous mass. In short, it all comes to this, that "regarding the nature of truth, we must maintain that not everything which appears is true; firstly, because even if sensation — at least of the object that is proper to a given sense — is not false, still imagination is not the same as sensation." ¹

Those who are disturbed by so frank an acknowledgment of our propensity to err in these things, or who are made uncomfortable by the contrast between the stern requirements of truth and an easy adaptation to appearances, should be reminded that "error is a state more natural to the animals than the truth, and in which the mind spends the

1. ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.*, IV, chap.5, 1010 b; ST. THOMAS, lect. 14. Cf. *De Anima*, III, chap.3, 427 b 15; ST. THOMAS, lect.4.

greater part of its time.”¹ The thing we can never afford to forget is the vast difference between the kind of certitude about nature required for making, and the far higher certitude demanded by that knowledge of nature which is purely for the sake of knowing : between knowing what stone is for the purpose of building, or what wheat is for the purpose of baking, and knowledge of what stone and wheat are for the sake of knowing just what they are in themselves quite apart from what they may be used for. Lack of mineralogy and botany did not prevent the Greeks from erecting fine buildings, or making a nourishing bread. Certitude is achieved in practical life when we know a thing as suitable to the end we have in view, whereas in speculative science, our aim is to make the mind conform to what things are absolutely.

IX. DIVISION OF ‘ DEMONSTRATION TO SENSE,’ TO CORRESPOND
WITH THAT OF SENSIBLE OBJECTS

We have frequently been using the demonstrative pronoun ‘ this ’ to express designation of something individual. Such designation to sense is also called *demonstratio ad sensum*, where ‘ demonstration ’ is taken in the original sense of that showing of a thing, that setting it apart from other things by pointing it out, which occurs first of all in the order of sense experience. Now that the general division of sensible objects has been established, there is a parallel division of demonstration to sense to be explained. That various modes of demonstration to sense must be distinguished is clear from the fact that ‘ this ’ in ‘ this sensation of warmth,’ ‘ this figure,’ ‘ this stone ’ or ‘ this man,’ is not of one kind. The failure to observe the distinction, and the common enough insistence that the only valid designation is one in the mode of the common sensibles, are the consequence of a tacit assumption that only common sensibles are real.

1. ‘ *Demonstration to sense* ’ in the order of proper sensibles

When asked to convey what ‘ warmth ’ stands for, as the name of a proper sense-object, we define the word by referring to an experience that another must be able to share, e.g., by approaching the fire, or by putting his hand in this water that feels warm to me — provided his hand has approximately the temperature of my own. In doing this we are not ‘ pointing out ’ the warmth as we would a

1. ARISTOTLE, *De Anima*, III, chap.3, 427 b. ST. THOMAS’S exposition reads as follows : “ For error seems to be more natural to animals, as they actually are, than knowledge. For experience proves that people easily deceive and delude themselves, whilst to come to true knowledge they need to be taught by others. Again, the mind is involved in error for a longer time than it spends in knowing truth, for we barely attain to knowledge of truth even after a long course of study ” (*Ibid.*, lect.4, n.624).

number or a figure. The warmth I point out is not 'there' in exactly the way the figure of the billiard-ball is 'there.' It is because tangible qualities and tastes cannot be pointed out as common sensibles are pointed out, that they are sometimes held to be at least less real. Yet it is not possible to doubt the reality of this sensation of warmth, not only as a sensation, but precisely as a sensation of warmth ; for the sensation is not received as the sensation of a sensation, but as the sensation of a warmth as real as anything else that I am aware of ; nor can I doubt that this water that I now feel to be warm really has something to do with this sensation of mine. However, this does not imply that I believe the warmth to be in the water in the way I feel it : the sensible warmth in act is the sense in act, and not the water, which is never more than sensible in potency. Taste is another case in point. I have no doubt about the reality of the taste of this apple as I eat it. However, to assert that the taste of this apple is real does not mean that the apple tastes good when no one is tasting it. Nor may I doubt that the apple has something to do with the real taste I have, although this real taste is not, nor could be, in the apple in the way it really is in me as I sense it.

The names of tangible qualities, of tastes and of smells are ambiguous, as can be seen from the expressions : ' the water feels warm,' ' the apple tastes good,' ' the milk smells sour,' — as if the feeling, the tasting, and the smelling were in the things themselves ; as if the sensation were in them. But common usage is merely bringing out the fact that the share of our physical organs in sensation cannot be divorced from the share of the thing that acts upon them. Both are involved. It would be just as naive to put the whole responsibility for *what* is sensed on the one who senses, as to put it all in the thing our sense refers to. The temperature of the water can be raised until the sense finds it unbearable ; and apple-growers can improve the taste of apples. These changes take place in the water and in the apples.

' The taste of an apple,' can mean two things, then, the particular kind of sensation of quality that I have when eating an apple, or that, in the apple, which produces (or co-produces with my sense organ) such a sensation. I can designate neither of these meanings to sense in the way that I can point out a billiard ball. And it should be noted particularly that there is more than the ' taste in the apple,' i.e., the share of the apple in causing sensation, that is ' outside the mind' ; even my tasting is outside the mind as the taste I have is here and now as this individual sense experience, a thing which I cannot help while eating. But to designate this individual experience in the way I designate the shape of the apple is not in my power.

... The sense objects which actuate sensitive activities — the visible, the audible, etc. — exist outside the mind ; the reason being that actual sensation attains to the individual things, which are outside the mind ; whereas

science is of universals which exist somehow within the mind. Whence it is clear that the man who already has scientific knowledge does not need to seek the objects outside himself ; he already possesses them inwardly, and is able, unless prevented for some incidental reason, to reflect on them whenever he pleases. But a man cannot sense whenever he pleases ; for he does not possess the sense objects in himself, but they must be present to him externally. And as with the operation of the senses, so with the sciences of sensible things ; for the sensible things themselves are among those which are singulars, and which exist outside the mind. Therefore a man cannot consider scientifically whatever sensible things he pleases, but only those which he perceives by the senses.¹

2. *Demonstration to sense of the common sensibles*

To point out common sensibles, like numbers or shapes, is apparently something far more simple than to point out proper sense-objects. We verify the meaning of a sensible 'two' when we point out two billiard-balls, and the meaning of 'spherical' by indicating their shape, and of 'where' by showing where one is with respect to the other. Again the word 'warmth' no longer signifies the proper sensible, when used with reference to the measure-number obtained by using a thermometer. The result is conveyed without reference to the sensation of warmth, and the word no longer means specifically the tangible quality nor, in any clear way, even the real quality in the thing which causes the feeling of warmth upon contact with the organ of touch. As regards the thermometer, then, the term warmth stands indirectly for no more than the measurable aspect of the quality. Between degrees of temperature defined by means of a thermometer and what we sense as warmth there exists no doubt a relation, but the relation is hardly clear. Of course we observe that to a rise of the measurable temperature of the water, there corresponds a more intense sensation of warmth ; and from the fact that this rise can be carried to a point which entails destruction of the organ it is plain that there is indeed a connection between what is expressed by the measure-number and what we feel as warmth. But, when the temperature of the water is eventually defined as the kinetic energy of its molecules, we are given no reason why temperature should produce in us a sensation of that kind.

It should now be apparent that temperature, defined in terms of a common sensible, can be demonstrated to sense as 'out there,' in a way that is impossible for proper sensible objects. In connection with common sensibles, 'out there' takes on a special meaning, and so does the expression 'outside the knower.' What is said to be 'out there' can be verified by a process of measurement ; while 'outside the

1. ST. THOMAS, *In II de Anima*, lect.12, nn.375-6.

knower ' now conveys a spatial meaning, that is, the known is outside the knower as this billiard-ball lies outside that one. It is often assumed that ' outside the knower ' must always convey this kind of outsideness ; but the assumption is unwarranted, for the independent reality of what is known in sensation of proper objects is not diminished by the fact that I cannot point it out as I can the figure of the billiard-ball. Nor is the reality of the known lessened in any way in the case where it is something of the knower in his own physical nature ; as when I feel warmth in my brow, that warmth is not less external to the mind than the warmth I feel when putting my hand in that water out there. No matter where the irritation takes place in the man who feels pain in an amputated leg, it is still an awareness of reality. Were I the only being making up a world, feeling and comparing only parts of myself, that world would be no less objective, outside myself as knower, and real, than a world made up of many individuals and of other knowing selves.

In fact, the ' real ' status of common sensibles, or of whatever is defined in terms of them, is genuine only to the degree that we attain real sensation of proper sensibles. If there is no value in the designation of the proper sensibles, then there is assuredly none in the designation of the common sensibles. If the so-called secondary qualities be no more than " mind-spinning," the real status of the primary ones will be carried off with them. Sir Arthur Eddington recalls that " When Dr. Johnson felt himself getting tied up in argument over ' Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that everything in the universe is merely ideal,' " he answered, " striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, — ' I refute it *thus*.' " Eddington adds : " Just what that action assured him of is not very obvious ; but apparently he found it comforting." ¹ But what Dr. Johnson's understanding of Berkeley's idealism was is less important here than what he claimed to be sure of in that action. And Sir Arthur himself makes it obvious enough in another of his books :

But although we try to make a clean start, rejecting instinctive or traditional interpretations of experience and accepting only the kind of knowledge which can be inferred by strictly scientific methods, we cannot cut ourselves loose altogether from the familiar story teller. We lay down the principle that he is always to be mistrusted ; but we cannot do without him in science. What I mean is this : we rig up some delicate physical experiment with galvanometers, micrometers, etc., specially designed to eliminate the fallibility of human perceptions ; but in the end we must trust to our perceptions to tell us the result of the experiment. Even if the apparatus is self-recording we employ our senses to read the records.²

1. *The Nature of the Physical World*, chap.XV, p.326.

2. *New Pathways in Science*, chap.I, p.2.

Here is a frank admission that sensation cannot be dispensed with, and must be trusted somewhere, if we are to have any trust in the physical basis of mathematical physics. The proper sensibles may not appear in the definitions with which this branch of natural science begins — as we have seen, some time is spent in getting rid of them¹ — nor need they be defined or explained when the inevitable return is made to them. Thermodynamics does not give the proper reason why a certain amount of disorderly movement of molecules should be accompanied in us by a sensation of warmth, nor does optics tell us why light of a given wave-length should make us see red. There is no way of getting behind this kind of sensation, whereas we can proceed to do something about the common sensibles, for example, the operation of measuring them. Yet even here, as we choose a standard of length and then apply it, we remain bound to a proper sensible of one kind or another, which cannot be rendered in terms of number or magnitude. Although our definitions may appear detached from the proper sensible to a considerable degree, they can never be wrested wholly free of it. Definitions bearing no relation to proper sensibles would have lost all contact with that reality which our senses seize, with no clear awareness of its nature perhaps, but with utter sureness. We may grant that physics, in order to make headway, must ignore our feeling of weight ; but at the same time we ourselves must surely be subject to the gravity that it talks about.

3. *Demonstration to sense of what is sensible "per accidens"*

To point out 'this man Socrates' is still another kind of demonstration to sense as widely different from the two preceding types as the incidentally sensible is from *per se* sensible objects. In pointing out Socrates we demonstrate something to sense which is attained *per se* by the mind and *per accidens* by the senses.

It is noteworthy that, in choosing an instance of what is meant by an individual demonstrable to sense, we fix upon a man, or upon some familiar animal, like a horse, but not so readily upon a point on the blackboard, nor even a stone. The reason is that we have internal

1. MAX PLANCK, *Theoretical Physics* : " While originally, . . . the fundamental ideas of physics were taken from the specific sense perceptions of man, the latter are today in large number excluded from physical acoustics, optics, and the theory of heat. The physical definitions of tone, color, and of temperature are today in no wise derived from perception through the corresponding senses . . ." — " The result is nothing more than the attainment of unity and compactness in our system of theoretical physics, and, in fact, the unity of the system, not only in relation to all of its details, but also in relation to physicists of all places, all times, all peoples, all cultures . . . To sum up, we may say that the characteristic feature of the actual development of the system of theoretical physics is an ever extending emancipation from the anthropomorphic elements, which has for its object the most complete separation possible of the system of physics and the individual personality of the physicist. One may call this the objectiveness of the system of physics " (pp.4-7).

experience of numerical unity, exhibited in our sensations, in our conscious activities of thinking, doing and making, as belonging to one and the same self. Of the visible point on the blackboard we know that it is just particles of chalk ; and of the stone, that while it may have the tangible and visible appearance of an individual like an individual man, it might still be many individuals. That a stone is an instance of individuality in some fashion is beyond doubt — there is nothing universal about this particular stone — but the individuality could be like that of a single crowd, or of the individual sun. We do not think this of a horse.

Though in sensing we are always referred to something that is *per accidens* sensible, we can rarely be sure that this something is a single individual in the way that a man is. For a man is unmistakably an integral whole, notwithstanding the many respects in which he is a composite, an assemblage. There is, to be sure, a way of referring to him as a collection. To the mathematical physicist, Socrates is a swarm of electric charges, sparsely scattered in an emptiness so out of proportion with what remains in him of bulk that the latter amounts to less than one billionth of the total of Socrates himself. To the anatomist, he may be an assemblage of head, arms, legs, liver, etc. ; and to the physiologist, a compact of various kinds of fibers each made up of certain types of cells, etc. The psychologist reveals in him another set of parts, like intellect, will, and various kinds of internal and external senses. And yet, when we point out Socrates, we are confident that he nevertheless makes one single individual ; nor could we possibly treat him like a crowd or a mere bundle of events. But the physicist, to whom he may be no more than a bundle of events, could not possibly point him out in any other way ; his roundabout way of demonstrating to sense can never terminate anywhere but in the domain to which he had to confine himself from the start : the domain of common sensibles.

What would happen to Socrates if only the second type of demonstration to sense were recognized as valid ? if he were singled out only by means of his common sensibles ? Although substance as such is not our present concern, yet it may be helpful to watch what Socrates (or Mr. Smith) becomes when Bertrand Russell attempts to reject substance, both in notion and reality, by assuming that there is no other way of denoting than that permissible to the physicist :

“ Substance,” in fact, is merely a convenient way of collecting events into bundles. What can we know about Mr. Smith ? When we look at him, we see a pattern of colours ; when we listen to him talking, we hear a series of sounds. We believe that, like us, he has thoughts and feelings. But what is Mr. Smith apart from all these occurrences ? A mere imaginary hook, from which the occurrences are supposed to hang. They have in fact no need of a hook, any more than the earth needs an elephant to rest upon. Any one can see, in the analogous case of a geographical region,

that such a word as "France" (say) is only a linguistic convenience, and that there is not a *thing* called "France" over and above its various parts. The same holds of "Mr. Smith"; it is a collective name for a number of occurrences. If we take it as anything more, it denotes something completely unknowable, and therefore not needed for the expression of what we know.¹

It is surely very odd, though, that even as we are dismissing him as a mere collection of events, we do not seem able to avoid denoting this incidentally sensible *him*, Mr. Smith. If we can rest satisfied with this sort of verbal twist, it is because we accept the supposition that there is only one adequate way of denoting to sense. Yet, as the example proves, we are also assuming the third mode and actually using it to establish the second: that which we call a mere series of sounds and pattern of colour is the man we see and hear, Mr. Smith. In fact, even the first mode is involved here (and hence all three): for we cannot see him without seeing colour, nor hear him without hearing sound. Observe, too, that, in the example as it is stated, the second mode, to which the other two are intended to yield, is actually least in evidence. For it is not made clear that the colour pattern and the series of sounds are meant to be understood as the physicist defines them, not as we see and hear them. The implied reduction to measure-numbers would have been somewhat more awkward had the figure of Mr. Smith or the arrangement of his members been selected as samples of the experiences he occasions in us.

Required as we are to disregard the third mode of designation, we shall also logically be compelled to overlook *what* Mr. Smith is saying here and now, for what he intends to convey by his series of sounds is not present in them as spherical shape is in the billiard-ball, and hence must escape the scientific filter through which Russell is passing him. And if we choose to call Mr. Smith a man, and to explain 'man' by 'rational animal,' we will certainly be forced to abandon 'rational' as not susceptible of designation to sense. In fact, even 'animal' must escape us, if by 'animal' is meant 'a body apt to have sensation,' since we cannot point out a sensation as we can a common sensible.

In short, when we declare Mr. Smith to be no more than a collection of events, we imply that he is only something that the physicist can express in terms of measure-numbers. But, in mathematical physics, when names are used — and they seem to be needed at times — they stand for one or more measure-numbers and theoretical constructions properly expressed by symbols that are not names. By rigid scientific standards, then, once we really know Mr. Smith we should not name him at all; for he is not the kind of individual

1. *A History of Western Philosophy*, pp.201-202.

he seems to be, and to give him a collective name would only oblige us to face a collection of quasi-hims, things and aspects of things like those which 'France' is intended to convey.

X. THE ATTEMPT TO DIVORCE OURSELVES FROM DEPENDENCE UPON SENSE OBJECTS

We have already said that to attribute to ourselves or, more exactly, to our sensations alone, the qualities we sense, would be just as naive as to put the burden of *what* we sense upon something designatable in the fashion of a common sensible. The clear impossibility of doing so has inclined many to reject 'secondary' qualities as unreal, as mere projections of the imagination. Now, what explains this attempt to shake off what is actually first in knowledge and without which nothing else can be known? For, just as we could not know what a sensation is without having a real one, so we could not know anything real without having a sensation.

What seems to instigate the typical objections to the validity of proper sensibles is the half-conscious hope of finding out how things would appear, and what essential properties they would have, if they could be reached by some avenue other than that avenue of proper sensation which is our first and last means of approach to them. "When an external object raps on the door at the extremity of a nerve, you cannot put your head outside to see what is rapping,"¹ but you cannot help wishing that you could. What should be observed is that the things our senses refer us to act upon us physically even before awareness is aroused — 'before' meaning at least by priority of nature. When I feel warmth, something happens to the temperature of my hand, thanks to a difference in temperature between the organ and that which is affecting it. The sensation of course does not consist simply in this physical change, for then stones ought to feel warmth when heated. But the point is that there is no sense-knowledge without some physical alteration, and it is this which makes all the difference between reason and sense, however much the former may depend upon the latter. A relatively high or low temperature is sufficient to destroy the sense of touch; while rational knowledge of a temperature, no matter how extreme, does not destroy reason. When we ourselves are so entitatively and obscurely involved in the very act of sensation, it follows that we can hardly hope for a detachment like that of reason in mathematics. There is detachment in sensation itself to the extent that there is knowledge, but it remains knowledge essentially bound to a physical organ involved in the act of knowing. And since sensation continues in one way or another to

1. EDDINGTON, *New Pathways in Science*, p.6.

be a condition of every kind of knowledge we can acquire, we have simply got to learn how to live with it, while keeping it in its place.

It is noteworthy that difficulties concerning the status of proper sensibles have been raised chiefly with regard to tangible qualities, and that these have been, in one breath, called fictitious and, in the next, invoked as the chief basis for our confidence in reality. It is indeed a paradox that touch may be considered the least objective of our senses, while at the same time it is in feeling resistance to touch that we are first and most vividly aware of what is 'outside the mind.' This is quite understandable when we realize that touch, as compared to sight, is, on the one hand, so coarse, so poor in representation, since its organ is so inextricably entangled with whatever is touched ; while, on the other hand, it is in the feel of being buffeted by reality in resistance to our touch ¹ that we have the most vivid experience of existence. It is the sense, the touchstone, upon which the most elaborate theories of mathematical physics must continue to rely. Without it we could not reach even existence in the sense of truth that is essential to every science. Yet if there were not this unmistakeable entitative involvement ² between touch and touched, if the organ itself were divested of the contraries of hard and soft, warm and cold, wet and dry, it could not bring us that assurance, admittedly gross, which it is normal to expect from it — the assurance sought by the doubting Thomas in all of us. The eye never conveys that assurance so strikingly, except when in pain from excessive light, and even this must be attributed to touch lying at its base.

XI. THE MEANING OF SENSIBLE MATTER

WITH REGARD TO THE DEFINITIONS OF MATHEMATICAL PHYSICS

In order to understand the precise relationship of sensible matter to the definitions of mathematical physics, it will be necessary to

1. It is a universal experience that, whenever man wants certainty about the real existence of a sense object, he will try to verify it by touch. If is for this reason especially that touch is called the sense of certitude, while sight is the sense of distinction, of clarity, and of representation. Where the brute fact of physical existence is concerned, sight, notwithstanding its accuracy of discernment and its certitude of distinction, yields less assurance than touch. The words "phantom" or "ghost" usually stand for things visual, yet unreal and intangible ; we compare them to the kind of representations we have in our dreams. Even when not doubting the things we see but cannot touch, we somehow feel more at home when they are brought within our reach, as is proved by the large numbers of people in this century ready to face any risk in order to set foot on the moon.

2. Let it be repeated that sensation cannot, of course, consist in this mere entitative involvement. The material change by itself is no more than a prerequisite, during which the sense power is still only in potency to true sensation. Sensation as knowledge is a change of a radically different kind. This is a subject for rational psychology, taken up by ARISTOTLE in the *De Anima*, Book II, chap.5 and 12 (St. THOMAS's Commentary, lect.11, 12 and 24) ; Book III, chap.7 (lect.12).

determine three things : first, what the common sensibles have to do with these definitions — a question easily enough answered ; secondly, to what extent the measure-numbers of this science are independent of proper sensibles ; thirdly, in what sense the incidentally sensible subject called ‘ sensible matter ’ enters into the statements of the physicist.

1. *The case of common sensibles*

Even the common sensibles, while dependent upon some proper sensible for our perception of them, are *per se* sensible, since they too produce a modification in our senses. By this is meant that they produce a physical change, as well as the change involved in knowing ; as the shape of a coin is imprinted on the hand that squeezes it ; or as the contour of the desk is successively registered on the fingers run along its edge, along with the sensation of movement ; and as a change takes place in the organ of sight while watching this shape and this movement. Even though a common sensible, like the actual size of the sun, for example, may lie beyond the scope of sensation, its physical reality remains beyond question ; nor is physics obliged to limit its investigations to those which can be established by the senses working through the tape-measure.

But when the physicist puts down the diameter of the sun, he cannot mean diameter quite as in geometry, where diameters are as intangible as points or lines. There is indeed even a connection with proper sensibles involved here insofar as the size of the sun is inseparable from its temperature. The fact is that, when he determines real size, no matter how far beyond the range of actually sensible magnitude, he still defines size in terms of how we measure it within the narrow scope of actual sensation, by means of a standard agreed upon — like the meter. He can claim knowledge of that which lies beyond the immediate reach of our senses — in remote stellar space, or deep in our very organs of sensation — only on this basic assumption : that the realities far beyond the scope of sensation to which he is applying numbers, magnitudes and quantitative modes are yet one in nature with those we can actually sense.

2. *Reference to proper sensibles*

Now let us turn to the *proper sensibles*. Apparently they are never expressed in an equation ; yet no equation can be called physical without reference to one or another of them. Until recently, scientists failed to realize the extent to which measure-numbers are inseparable from the basic standard of length, from scales, clocks, thermometers, and so on, as well as from the operations performed in using them. Measure-numbers are not gathered freely like the numbers and magni-

tudes of mathematics. 'What is extended in one dimension' gives us length, but nothing like a standard of length; the latter cannot be made known by this type of definition at all. We can tell what we mean by 'the meter.' We call it a measure (in Latin *mensura*, in Greek μέτρον) which we define as 'that by which the quantity of a thing is first known'; but this definition does not tell us what the meter is, to which the merchant or the physicist actually refers. The meter happens to be an individual thing, kept in a certain place and even in its designation, bound to a particular time: "The meter as now defined is the distance between two lines on a certain platinum-iridium bar kept at the International Bureau of Weights and Measures in Paris, when this bar is at 0°C. or 32°F. Copies of this bar are kept elsewhere" (Webster's). How much this ties us to the ineffable singular is plain from the fact that the graduated scale of the very instrument used to measure the temperature of the meter is divided by lines which are measured by the meter.

All will concede that to look at this bar is to see a colour, thanks to which there can be perceived lines and a certain distance between them. All will concede that the bar is hard and cold to touch; that the lines could also be detected by the finger-tips, and the intervening distances by moving the finger-tips from one to the next. But, it will be argued, what we are really interested in is the bar as our standard of length, not the qualities which allow us to perceive it. But this is not the whole truth. If we abstracted from every sensible quality by means of which the thing becomes known to us as a physical thing decreed to be the standard of measure, what would meter mean? What the physical property of length would be to an intellect which needs neither sensation nor any practical operation to know it would be something fascinating for us to guess at; but our concern is with ourselves; how do we know a physical length? Aristotle faces this problem with the well-known example of the snub-nose. If our definition conveys the curve alone, prescind from bone and flesh, will our definition of such an object still be a physical one? If we call it physical, we are assuming that there are curves in nature apart from curved subjects like a nose, or a moon, or the orbit of a moon. The curve defined without sensible matter, the mathematically abstract curve, has a simplicity nowhere matched in experience, and can no more be identified with the shape of a nose or a planet than a mathematical point can be identified with a star. Now, when we divorce our common sensibles from all sensible qualities, we are making them into such mathematical entities, which are not even sensible; we are then faced with a curvature, for example, so absolutely exact that it can no longer be verified with exactness in experience.

It should now be clear that the incidentally sensed subject, which we called sensible matter, does appear in the definitions of the physicist. To abstract from that subject always means to be left

with something which is not the business of the physicist as such. Besides, if definitions are of universals, the definition of the meter to which the mathematical physicist refers, is not a definition in that sense ; it is a nominal definition or interpretation of a name.

X. IN WHAT MANNER THE DEFINITIONS OF MATHEMATICAL PHYSICS CONTAIN SENSIBLE MATTER

It is one thing to establish that the physicist must define with sensible matter, and another to show just how he takes account of it. The common impression that his statements disregard sensible matter entirely is not without justification, to say the least ; for he certainly appears to confine himself to the order of common sensibles, that is, to sensible numbers, magnitudes and modes of quantity, and soon arrives at entities and structures beyond the reach of actual sensation. It is therefore our duty to explain exactly how, even in the mathematical science of nature, the law governing all natural science applies, namely, that contact with, and dependence upon, the material reality upon which we lay our fingers is the ultimate test of validity.

1. *Whether what lies beyond the threshold of sensation can still be called sensible*

Let us begin with the following observation. The limens or thresholds of sensation are very narrow. The range between extreme cold and extreme warmth, perceptible to human touch, is but a minute fraction in the scale of measurable temperature. The heat at which the sense organ itself would be destroyed is very near the bottom of a scale that runs to millions of degrees. In terms of the proper sensibles, then, what can be meant by the heat inside the sun ? If sensible matter is so called because of its sensible qualities, it seems a likely conclusion that sensible matter is nowhere to be found beyond the narrow thresholds of sense awareness, — not for the physicist, at any rate, since he seems not even to mention matter, nor to be inconvenienced by the absence of it. But, if we stop to think, we must realize that what he can never forsake or ignore is 'that of which we have sense experience.' Our question therefore is always the old one : what is it that we do have sense-experience of ?

In his famous illustration of how the physicist treats the elephant sliding down a grassy hillside, Eddington makes plain that he is concerned only with pointer readings — like weight, bulk, friction, etc. — obtained by measurement applied to the elephant. Now the weighing-machine is of course quite indifferent to what it is that is being weighed : enough coal would provide the same measure-number of two tons. As the student puts down the elements needed to solve

the problem of how long it will take the elephant to reach the bottom of the hill, the elephant himself fades out of the picture ; i.e., what it is that slid down the hill has left the scene and that which the student retains can only be described as a bundle of pointer readings. To the mathematical physicist, the only man to handle such problems, it is precisely the "connectivity of pointer readings, expressed by physical laws, which supplies the continuous background that any realistic problem [in physics] demands."¹ And so "we have dismissed all preconception as to the background of our pointer readings, and for the most part we can discover nothing as to its nature."²

This kind of information does not of course pretend to teach us what it is to be an elephant. But it does tell us that, when something (whatever it may be) of a given bulk and weight slides down a slope of such a degree, it takes so much time to reach the bottom. Yet the point is that no matter how indifferent is the specific nature of the thing thus described, however irrelevant, once the pointer readings are obtained, something remains that is not a pointer reading. When the physicist considers a curve, it may be quite indifferent to the problem at hand whether it is the curve of a snub-nose or the curvature of the moon. But it must be the curvature of something or other, something demonstrable as 'this,' and which is not the curvature itself. Otherwise, what would be the difference between the form of a wave of liquid and its vaguely corresponding geometrical form? The reply need not grant so much as that the first is the form of a 'material mass,' but it must admit that it is the form of something conveyed to us through the senses even though in itself it could never actually be sensed *per se*. This much is certain, anyhow, the wave is not a wave of matter in the sense which the physicist intends when he distinguishes between 'matter' and 'energy.' The latter words are used by him as linguistic devices in lieu of the symbols that are the true means of expressing what he has in mind.

2. *Sensible matter and Eddington's 'knowability of matter'*

The sensible matter that we are talking about is not to be identified with what Eddington calls "the background of the pointer readings," but rather with what he calls matter as "knowable to mind," to mind as distinguished from mere sensation. What we term 'sensible matter,' i.e., sensible *per accidens* and intelligible *per se*, is indeed a kind of background, too. But we are not requested to picture this 'background' as we do an elephant or an ocean wave ; it is not to be thought of as standing behind a measure-number as a tree might stand behind Mr. Smith. The background which makes

1. *The Nature of the Physical World*, p.255.

2. *Ibid.*, p.259.

the curve a physical one does not hold it up as Lord Russell's elephant might support the earth. In what relation to the pointer readings does it stand? Eddington moves a step or two nearer to the character of this 'background' when he observes that "physics treats of what is knowable to mind," and the fact that matter is knowable must be set down as one of the fundamental attributes of matter.

[... And this] potentiality of the whole physical world for awakening impressions in consciousness is an attribute not to be ignored when we compare the actual world with worlds which, we fancy, *might* have been created... We recognize the actuality of a particular world because it is that world alone with which consciousness interacts. However much the theoretical physicist may dislike a reference to consciousness, the experimental physicist uses freely this touchstone of actuality. He would perhaps prefer to believe that his instruments and observations are certified as actual by his material sense-organs... Each of us is armed with this touchstone of actuality; by applying it we decide that this sorry world of ours is actual and Utopia is a dream...

From a broader point of view than that of elaborating the physical scheme of law we cannot treat the connection with mind as merely an incident in a self-existent inorganic world. In saying that the differentiation of the actual from the non-actual is only expressible by reference to mind I do not mean to imply that a universe without conscious mind would have no more status than Utopia. But its property of actuality would be indefinable since the one approach to a definition is cut off. The actuality of Nature is like the beauty of Nature. We can scarcely describe the beauty of a landscape as non-existent when there is no conscious being to witness it; but it is through consciousness that we can attribute a meaning to it. And so it is with the actuality of the world. If actuality means "known to mind" then it is a purely subjective character of the world; to make it objective we must substitute "knowable to mind." The less stress we lay on the accident of parts of the world being known at the present era to particular minds, the more stress we must lay on the *potentiality* of being known to mind as a fundamental objective property of matter, giving it the status of actuality whether individual consciousness is taking note of it or not.¹

"Knowable to mind" we interpret as 'sensible matter.' For it is acknowledged that there is reference to the actuality in question by the material sense organs, while Eddington goes on to explain (in a passage omitted above) that the "final guarantor is the mind that comes to know the indications of the material organs." These statements account well enough for what we call "sensible matter," insofar as it is *per se* knowable to the mind while only incidentally sensed; — a kind of actuality and knowability that we demonstrate to sense according to the third mode.

1. *Op. cit.*, pp.264-267.

Hence, the particular domain of mathematical physics shows "a definitely selective action of the mind ; and since physics treats of what is knowable to mind its subject matter has undergone, and indeed retains evidences of, this process of selection. [...] The sphere of the differential equations of physics is the metrical cyclic scheme extracted out of the broader reality. However much the ramifications of the cycles may be extended by further scientific discovery, they cannot from their very nature trench on the background in which they have their being — their actuality."¹ The whole point is, however, that while the sensible matter to which the pointer readings refer the mind, is not brought to the fore, the actuality of the metrical world of physics is guaranteed only by the actuality of that background as perceived by the mind thanks to sensation. Eddington pointedly says "knowable to mind" ; and he distinguishes "the actuality of being known" from "the potentiality of being known," just as we distinguished 'to be sensed in act,' which is on the part of the knower, from 'sensible in potency,' which is the actuality of what there is sensation of.

3. *Mathematical physics implies all three modes of demonstration to sense*

From this it is plain that mathematical physics actually depends upon all three modes of demonstration to sense, and that Eddington's philosophy of science implies this. (i) It confines itself to the metrical aspect of nature, first revealed as common sensibles (or primary qualities), and to which we must always return. (ii) The common sensibles are not perceived independently of some proper sensible or other. (iii) The mind cannot help but refer the metrical structure to a background which we call sensible matter.

This matter is not *per se* sensible ; nor is it something merely intelligible. It is an object which the mind attains to as the proper subject of what is *per se* sensed. It can be known *per se* neither by external sense nor by imagination. In fact, it is our unwarranted attempt to imagine that subject which creates the need of an elephant for the earth to rest upon.

XIII. IN WHAT SENSE THE OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF PHYSICS ARE DEFINITIONS

By showing that the mathematical physicist, as well as any other student of nature, defines with sensible matter we have actually done more than that : we have found on the one hand that measure-numbers are symbols interpreted by describing certain contrivances and the

1. *Op. cit.*, p.264, 282.

operations by which these contrivances are put to use in order to reach a certain quantity ; we have seen how, in every instance, the standard of length is basic to all the other measurements, as is clear from the graduated scales of clocks, weighing machines, thermometers, and so on ; and that this basic standard is a certain platinum-iridium bar kept in Paris at a certain temperature. In other words, it is not enough to refer to 'some' individual thing : it must be the individual thing now in Paris.

1. *These definitions are interpretations of symbols*

Now this is not at all like the reply to "What is meant by the word 'man'?" which may consist in pointing out any man who happens along ; or like the answer to "What is intended by an 'equilateral triangle'?" which consists in making a particular construction. In physics it is as if the interpretation of the word man always implied reference to the particular individual called Socrates now living at such an address ; so that if any other man were pointed out, the reference would be valid only inasmuch as the other man were, not just another instance of man, but a reasonably faithful copy of the one named Socrates. It is as if, in the case of the 'equilateral triangle,' we had to refer to a construction made in the mind of Socrates, on the first of July, at such an address, with the help of a piece of chalk and the kitchen floor. An instance of the meter is never to be understood like an instance of 'man' or an instance of 'equilateral triangle.' An instance of a meter is a copy of 'the meter,' a particular object at a particular place, time, and temperature. The definitions of mathematical physics are therefore a very special type of interpretation : one which ultimately amounts to the designation of an individual something that will be the unique standard until a new convention is made. If we made the historical 'Socrates' equivalent to 'philosopher,' meaning that no one is a philosopher except in the degree that he is a duplicate of Socrates, we would be following a parallel usage.

Such definitions, then, cannot be definitions in the sense of expressing what a thing is ; they are simply interpretations of what the names or the symbols stand for. The definitions of mathematical physics are not even 'nominal' definitions and should not be confused with them. The physicist does not use descriptions, like "two-legged featherless animal" as interpreting the name 'man.' For the physicist as such does not use names, but operational symbols as distinguished from names. When he uses words like 'matter,' 'body,' 'movement,' or 'time,' he employs them merely as convenient linguistic substitutes for what should actually be expressed by measure-numbers. If he used them in any other way, he would be making them stand for something which, as a mathematical physi-

cist he cannot know, and hence cannot express. Further, unlike the symbols of mathematics, the symbols of physics can be interpreted only by referring to the kind of real individual described above.

2. *Although its interpretations must continue to refer to the individual sensible matter of the standard of measure, the aim of the science remains universal*

This last point seems to imply that the mathematical physicist is not concerned with the kind of universality that we saw as essential to science in the strict sense of this term. Yet, we have already insisted that even the physicist is not concerned with this universe *qua this*. And this view is still adhered to by men who are held to be authorities. Thus Whitehead declares that "to see what is general in what is particular and what is permanent in what is transitory is the aim of scientific thought."¹ Lord Russell agrees, for he speaks of "that essence of individuality which always eludes words and baffles description, but which, for that very reason, is irrelevant to science."² Henri Poincaré held, on the other hand, that "every generalisation is an hypothesis."³ The implication of this last remark is that, while the physicist does not pretend to have achieved any definitive generalisation, nevertheless, he seeks for his hypothesis the kind of confirmation by experiment that will assure him of being at least on the road towards strict generality. To attain this limit is out of the question, of course. No science can hope to formulate laws that apply everywhere and always when, by the very nature of the method which it employs, it is held bound to that standard of measure which alone gives meaning to its symbols.

If the day should dawn when the mathematical physicist could abstract from this particular standard to know the general laws of nature, he would find himself contemplating the universe from outside it, free from the limitations imposed on us by our dependence upon sensation. Individual sensible matter would no longer be a principle, neither *qua* individual nor *qua* sensible. In the meantime, he can only go on proposing tentative generalisations, on the general assumption of a similarity in structure between, on the one hand, the measure-numbers he obtains and the generalisations he makes from them, and, on the other hand, the absolute condition of the world, that is, the world as it is apart from how we get to know about it. Eddington put it this way :

But the physicist is not generally content to believe that the quantity he arrives at is something whose nature is inseparable from the kind of opera-

1. *Introduction to Mathematics*, p.11.

2. *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, p.61.

3. *La Science et l'hypothèse*, p.178.

tions which led to it ; he has an idea that if he could become a god contemplating the external world, he would see his manufactured physical quantity forming a distinct feature of the picture. By finding that he can lay x unit measuring-rods in a line between two points he has manufactured the quantity x which he calls the distance between the points ; but he believes that that distance x is something already existing in the picture of the world — a gulf which would be apprehended by a superior intelligence as existing in itself without reference to the notion of operations with measuring-rods.

.....
The study of physical quantities, although they are the results of our own operations (actual or potential), gives us some kind of knowledge of the world conditions, since the same operations will give different results in different world conditions. It seems that this indirect knowledge is all that we can ever attain, and that it is only through its influences on such operations that we can represent to ourselves a 'condition of the world.' Any attempt to describe a condition of the world otherwise is either mathematical symbolism or meaningless jargon.¹

It would be entirely facetious to insist that this most exact of the sciences of nature cannot really claim to be a science at all in the strict sense of the term 'science.' Mathematical physics is the only means we have to extract a certain kind of knowledge about nature, and to grasp its aim and how near it can approach to truth is not less important than to expose its limitations.

We must never forget that our nature is that of the animal, to whom error is more natural than truth. And the most unfailing error of this animal is perhaps the premature confidence that he has the truth, that universal terms and propositions are as readily plucked from nature as cherries from a tree. Even when it is granted a background of centuries, the human mind "is involved in error for a longer time than it spends in knowing the truth."² This was plainly the case of Descartes, and of his followers into the XIXth Century, believing as they did that, from what turns out to be no more than imaginary 'matter and movement,' man could construct the universe in all that it is.

Charles DE KONINCK.

(To be continued)

1. *The Mathematical Theory of Relativity*, pp.1, 3.

2. Cf. ST. THOMAS, *In Boethium de Trinitate*, q.3, a.1, ad 4: "... Etsi demonstratione numquam falsum concludatur, tamen frequenter in hoc homo fallitur, quod putat esse demonstrationem quod non est."

Marie dans le gouvernement de l'Église

CHAPITRE DEUXIÈME *

LA CAUSALITÉ INSTRUMENTALE PHYSIQUE DE MARIE

I. DIFFICULTÉ DE LOCALISER CETTE CAUSALITÉ

Le chapitre précédent n'avait d'autre fin que d'introduire celui-ci. Si la grâce, en effet, n'est pas le terme immédiat d'une activité créatrice, il n'y a plus d'impossibilité pour la créature de concourir à la production de la grâce, à titre de cause instrumentale. De fait, nous avons vu comment il est bien dans le mode d'agir de Dieu de se servir de ses créatures, même dans l'ordre surnaturel, comme il le fait de l'Humanité sainte, des ministres et des sacrements. Or à tous ces instruments il faut attribuer une causalité physique.

Il est reconnu que Marie a certains rapports avec la collation de la grâce aux âmes. La première partie de ce travail a rapporté les opinions des théologiens à ce sujet. Mais est-il possible de voir dans ces rapports de Marie avec la grâce une véritable causalité instrumentale dans le sens des instruments mentionnés ci-haut ? C'est le problème qu'il nous reste à considérer.

Le rapport de Marie avec la grâce n'est, et ne peut être, ni celui de l'Humanité sainte, ni celui des sacrements, ni celui des ministres.

Le rapport de l'Humanité sainte à la grâce est celui d'un instrument conjoint de la divinité.

Par son union personnelle au Verbe, l'Humanité du Christ est en disponibilité immédiate et constante à l'égard de la divinité, comme le corps vis-à-vis de l'âme,¹ ou la main pour le corps.²

Il est évident qu'un tel rapport ne saurait exister pour Marie. N'étant pas unie à Dieu hypostatiquement, elle ne peut être que dans la catégorie des instruments séparés.

L'instrument séparé est extrinsèque à celui qui s'en sert : « unum quidem separatum, ut baculus. » C'est le cas du sacrement : « sacra-

* La première partie de cet article est parue dans le numéro précédent.

1. Ce rapprochement que fait SAINT THOMAS (*IIIa*, q.8, a.2, c.), n'est pas en tout point identique, mais sous un rapport seulement. L'âme est forme du corps ; la divinité n'est pas forme de la nature humaine. C'est en tant que mû par l'âme que le corps en est l'instrument ; c'est de même en tant que mue par la divinité que l'Humanité sainte du Verbe est un instrument.

2. « Est autem duplex instrumentum : unum quidem separatum, ut baculus ; alius autem conjunctum, ut manus. » *IIIa*, q.62, a.5, c.

mentum autem sicut instrumentum separatum.»¹ En ceci, Marie pourrait être, comme instrument séparé, dans le rapport des sacrements et des ministres.

Saint Thomas fait cependant une autre distinction entre instrument inanimé et instrument animé. Le sacrement est de la première catégorie. Or Marie est un être vivant, doué d'une âme raisonnable. Elle ne peut donc être assimilée au sacrement, instrument inanimé.

Reste le ministre. Il diffère à la fois de l'Humanité sainte, en ceci qu'il n'est pas un instrument conjoint ; et des sacrements, en ce qu'il est un instrument animé.

En ces deux points, il y a rencontre entre Marie et les ministres. Mais Marie n'est pas prêtre, comme nous l'avons dit plus haut.² Il y a donc entre elle et le ministre ordinaire des sacrements une différence essentielle. Il faut conclure que si Marie a quelque titre à être cause instrumentale de la grâce, ce n'est à aucun de ceux que nous avons mentionnés.

Le principe qui doit diriger toute recherche, quand il s'agit d'apprécier la dignité de Marie et, par suite, l'efficacité de son opération, est le suivant : « Quanto enim natura est Deo propinquior, tanto expressior in ea divinae dignitatis similitudo invenitur. »³

Or, après l'Humanité sainte du Christ, aucune créature n'est aussi près de Dieu que ne l'est Marie. Si, par nature, elle est inférieure aux anges, elle leur est incomparablement supérieure par la grâce de sa Maternité divine et sa grâce « gratum faciens ».

La dignité de Mère de Dieu, en effet, place Marie au sommet de toutes les pures créatures. Élisabeth la salue « Mater Domini ».⁴ Les Conciles l'ont appelée la « Deipara ».⁵

Léon XIII déclare : « Certe Matris Dei tam in excelso dignitas est, ut nihil fieri maius queat. »⁶ Pie XI parle de « summa post Deum dignitas ».⁷ Pie XII affirme : « Nullum igitur dubium est Mariam sanctissimam dignitate sua super omnes res creatas excellere. »⁸

La Tradition est unanime à célébrer l'excellence de cette Maternité. Saint Germain de Constantinople écrit : « Superat creata omnia tuus honor et dignitas ; »⁹ et saint Jean Damascène : « Infinitum Dei servorum ac Matris discrimen est. »¹⁰ D'où l'auteur du *Mariale* attri-

1. *IIIa*, q. 62, a. 5, c.

2. Voir numéro précédent, p. 72.

3. *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 4, c.

4. *LUC*, 1, 43.

5. *Conc. Ephes.*, Denz., 111 a.

6. *Enc. Quamquam pluries*.

7. *Enc. Lux veritatis*.

8. *Enc. Ad coeli Reginam*.

9. *Hom. II, in Dormitionem B. Mariae Virginis* ; PG 98, 354 B.

10. *Hom. I, in Dormitionem B. Mariae Virginis* ; PG 96, 715 Q.

bué à saint Albert le Grand a raison de dire : « Beata Virgo non cadit in numerum cum aliis : quia non est una de omnibus, sed est una super omnes. » ¹

Saint Thomas résume toute la Tradition en affirmant : « Beata Virgo ex hoc quod est Mater Dei, habet quandam dignitatem infinitam ex bono infinito quod est Deus. » ²

Marie est donc bien l'être créé qui, après l'Humanité sainte du Christ, est le plus près de Dieu, au point d'appartenir en raison de sa Maternité divine à l'ordre hypostatique même. C'est de là que doit se faire l'évaluation de tout ce qui touche en quelque manière à l'excellence de sa personne comme à l'étendue de ses pouvoirs.

II. UNICITÉ DU RÔLE INSTRUMENTAL DE MARIE

Marie appartient à l'ordre hypostatique.³ En raison du caractère unique de son union au Verbe incarné, elle entre, à un titre qu'aucune autre créature ne peut revendiquer, en relation avec la Trinité, le Christ Rédempteur, l'Église. C'est sous ce triple aspect que nous allons considérer les fondements de son rôle instrumental.

1) Rapports avec les Personnes divines

Marie n'est pas, dans l'œuvre du salut, un instrument choisi au hasard, en cours d'opération, comme il arrive dans les œuvres hu-

1. *Mariale*, q.60.

2. *Ia Pars*, q.25, a.6, ad 4.

3. « Nous disons « ordre hypostatique » car il faut distinguer *union* hypostatique et *ordre* hypostatique. Cette distinction s'impose déjà à propos du Christ : il n'y a pas que la grâce d'union qui soit d'ordre hypostatique ; la grâce habituelle du Christ, qui est une grâce capitale, est propre à cet ordre. La grâce habituelle du Christ se distingue de toutes les autres, non par un simple degré d'intensité mais par un mode éminent qui s'enracine dans l'union hypostatique. De même, toute proportion gardée, la grâce de Marie se distingue de la nôtre. Notre grâce est une grâce commune, effet de la rédemption réparatrice, et qui obéit à la *loi commune*. En revanche, la grâce de Marie est toute singulière, privilège qui soustrait la Mère de Dieu à la loi commune. Et non seulement la grâce de la maternité divine appartient à cet ordre, mais aussi la grâce « *gratum faciens* » de Marie. En d'autres termes, la grâce de Marie se distingue encore de la nôtre, par un mode éminent propre à l'ordre hypostatique. » — « Mais en quoi consiste l'ordre hypostatique ? le terme « hypostatique », dans la théologie de l'Incarnation, nous réfère à la Personne du Verbe. L'union au Verbe divin définit l'ordre hypostatique » — « Dieu le Père, principe de la mission invisible du Verbe qui s'opère en Marie, l'a prédestinée à un effet supérieur de mission invisible. Mission invisible du Verbe et de l'Esprit-Saint d'un ordre supérieur. Marie est au-dessus de la loi commune. Voilà pourquoi sa grâce ne pourrait être une grâce commune. Tout en elle est privilège. Sa grâce initiale la sépare de la masse corrompue du péché. Rachetée d'une manière sublime, par voie de rédemption préservatrice, elle devient co-principe de rédemption réparatrice. Elle est assimilée au Christ de la façon la plus intime. MAURICE DIONNE, *La grâce de Marie est d'ordre hypostatique*, dans *Laval théol. et philos.*, Vol. IX, n° 2, 1954, p.142.

maines. Elle est, au contraire, marquée de toute éternité par une prédestination unique : « Ineffabilis Deus . . . ab initio et ante saecula unigenito Filio suo Matrem . . . elegit atque ordinavit. » ¹

Aucune créature, ni avant ni après elle, n'est entrée en relations aussi intimes avec les Personnes divines à part l'Humanité sainte du Verbe incarné. Alors que toute activité créée ne dépasse jamais, à l'égard de Dieu, l'ordre intentionnel de la connaissance et de l'amour,² Marie, par son activité naturelle, sous l'influence surnaturelle de Dieu, atteint la divinité elle-même. Elle engendre dans son sein celui que l'activité proprement divine du Père engendre éternellement au sein de la Trinité.

Une relation réelle s'établit par suite entre Marie et le Fils de Dieu incarné.³

1. PIE IX, constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*.

2. « Oportet, si Dei essentia videatur, quod per ipsammet essentiam divinam intellectus ipsum videat, ut sic in tali visione divina essentia sit et quod videtur, et quo videtur. Cum autem intellectus substantiam aliquam intelligere non possit nisi fiat in actu, secundum aliquam speciem informantem ipsum quae sit similitudo rei intellectae, impossibile videri potest alicui, quod per essentiam divinam intellectus creatus possit videre ipsam Dei substantiam quasi per quamdam speciem intelligibilem, cum divina essentia sit quoddam per seipsum subsistens, et in primo (c.27) ostensum sit, quod Deus nullius potest esse forma . . . Nec . . . potest esse forma alterius rei secundum esse naturale. Sequeretur enim quod simul cum aliquo unita constitueret unam naturam ; quod esse non potest, cum essentia divina in se perfecta sit in sui natura. Species autem intelligibilis unita intellectui non constituit aliquam naturam, sed perficit ipsum ad intelligendum ; quod perfectioni divinae essentiae non repugnat. » *Contra Gentiles*, III, cap.51.

3. « Étant une activité qui transmet la substance propre à son produit, elle fonde l'union ou la parenté la plus réelle et la plus intime entre la mère et le Fils. Dans la maternité naturelle cette parenté se présente comme une parenté du sang. Telle est aussi la parenté de Marie avec le Christ, pour autant qu'il est son fruit, qu'il est homme . . . Cette dignité apparaît bien plus grande encore si nous considérons que la parenté de Marie avec l'Homme-Dieu se présente comme une parenté avec Dieu lui-même. Comme telle elle ne peut évidemment plus être une parenté du sang. Mais nous pouvons, avec SAINT THOMAS (*IIa IIae*, q.103, a.4) et d'après l'analogie d'une seconde forme de parenté humaine, l'appeler une affinité spirituelle, une parenté par alliance avec Dieu. » M. J. SCHEEBEN, *La Mère virginale du Sauveur*, pp.66-67.

Si nous pouvons dire qu'une relation réelle s'établit entre la Mère et le Fils, nous ne pouvons cependant dire inversement que cette relation réelle existe entre le Fils et la Mère. Nous pouvons bien, en considérant séparément la naissance éternelle du Verbe au sein du Père, et sa naissance temporelle au sein de Marie, comme Verbe incarné, reconnaître deux filiations. Mais si nous envisageons le sujet lui-même qui est une personne incréée, il faut reconnaître une seule filiation réelle, qui est éternelle. Cette filiation fonde vis-à-vis de Marie une relation qui est réelle du côté de Marie par rapport au Fils, mais qui ne peut être que de raison du côté du Verbe incarné par rapport à sa Mère. Aucune relation réelle ne peut exister en Dieu autre que celle d'une Personne divine vis-à-vis de celle qui en procède *ad intra*. Ainsi, Dieu créateur vis-à-vis de sa créature ne peut être affecté que d'une relation de raison du côté de Dieu, même si la créature, de son côté, a une relation réelle au Créateur. Ainsi Marie a une relation réelle de maternité vis-à-vis du Christ, et le Christ sera dit réellement son Fils selon la relation réelle de maternité de celle-ci. « Manifestum autem est, quod non una et eadem nativitate Christus est natus ex Patre ab aeterno, et ex matre ex tempore ; nec nativitas est unius speciei. Unde quantum ad hoc, oportet

Bien que seul le Verbe ait assumé une nature créée pour se l'unir hypostatiquement,¹ Marie est aussi en relation avec le Père auquel elle est associée par la génération d'un même Fils, bien que de façon différente,² et avec le Saint-Esprit auquel est attribuée l'Incarnation.

La Maternité divine place donc Marie en un rang supérieur à toute autre créature, non seulement dans l'ordre naturel parce que cette maternité se termine à une Personne divine, mais dans celui de la grâce et de la gloire, en tant que cette maternité, telle que voulue par Dieu, est exigitive d'une grâce au-dessus de l'ordre commun et propre à sa qualité de Mère de Dieu.³

Il n'entre pas dans notre dessein, ni dans les exigences de notre travail, de développer longuement ces relations avec chacune des Personnes divines. Il y a lieu cependant de nous attarder davantage à celles de Marie et du Saint-Esprit à qui sont attribuées les œuvres de sanctification.

teret dicere in Christo esse diversae filiationes, unam temporalem et aliam aeternam. Sed quia subjectum filiationis non est natura aut pars naturae, sed solum persona vel hypostasis, in Christo autem non est hypostasis vel persona, nisi aeterna ; non potest in Christo esse aliqua filio, nisi quae sit in hypostasi aeterna. * Omnis autem relatio quae ex tempore de Deo dicitur, non ponit in ipso Deo aeterno aliquid secundum rem, sed secundum rationem tantum ; et ideo filio qua Christus refertur ad matrem, non potest esse realis relatio sed solum secundum rationem . . . Dicitur tamen relative filius ad matrem relatione quae cointelligitur relationi maternitatis ad Christum . . . Christus dicitur realiter filius Virginis matris ex relatione reali maternitatis ad Christum. » *IIIa*, q.35, a.5, c.

1. Bien que les Trois Personnes soient au principe de l'Incarnation, une seule, la Personne du Verbe, termine hypostatiquement la nature humaine. « Deus dicitur esse homo in quantum suppositum divinae naturae, scilicet Filius, subsistit in humana natura per unionem. Haec autem unio relatio quaedam est, realiter in creatura assumpta existens ; quae quidem considerata secundum habitudinem ad terminum, sic terminatur ad personam Filii, in qua est facta unio ; sed secundum habitudinem ad principium, sic refertur ad totam Trinitatem, quae unionem fecit. » *I Sent.*, dist.30, q.1, a.2, ad 4. « Missus, incarnatus et huiusmodi important duas habitudines, scilicet termini et principii : quarum una, scilicet habitudo principii, convenit toti Trinitati ; unde dicimus quod tota Trinitas mittit vel facit incarnationem ; sed alteri convenit alicui personae determinatae, propter quod huiusmodi nomina non de tota Trinitate dicuntur. » *Ibid.*, dist.30, q.1, ad 3.

2. « Elle est unie au Père par le Fils qui est aussi son fils à Elle. » M. J. SCHEEBEN, *loc. cit.*, p.74. À partir de l'Incarnation, le Père engendre un Fils qui est homme, mais ce n'est pas comme homme qu'il l'engendre ; Marie engendre un fils qui est Dieu, mais ce n'est pas comme Dieu qu'elle le conçoit.

3. On peut considérer la Maternité divine *formaliter et simpliciter et in concreto*. En ce dernier sens, tous admettent sa supériorité en tout ordre. Quant au premier, les opinions sont partagées. Les théologiens de Salamanque mettent la grâce au-dessus de la maternité divine. D'autres, au contraire, comme HUGON, MERKELBACH, GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE pensent que la Maternité divine l'emporte. Ce sont là, comme disait SUAREZ, deux ordres différents qui « mutuo sese quodammodo excedunt. » *In IIIam*, disp.1, sect.2. Nous croyons, en définitive, avec HUGON et SUAREZ, que la Maternité l'emporte sur la grâce et qu'elle en est « tamquam prima forma ad suas proprietates ; et e converso aliae gratiae comparantur ad ipsam sicut dispositiones ad formam. » HUGON, *La Mère de grâce*, Lethielleux, Paris, 1904, p.95.

C'est dès sa toute première origine, dans son Immaculée-Conception, que l'Esprit-Saint possède déjà pleinement Celle qui donnera plus tard naissance au Verbe Incarné, et dont la grâce originelle est toute orientée vers cette Maternité future. Pie IX rappelle comment les Pères ont toujours vu en Marie un tabernacle « ab ipso Deo creatum, Spiritu Sancto formatum ». Par dessus toutes les autres créatures, « sola tota facta domicilium universarum gratiarum Sanctissimi Spiritus ».¹

Celle que le Saint-Esprit s'est unie à ce point, dès son premier instant, il ne l'a jamais répudiée.² L'union contractée est perpétuelle. Il y eut entre Marie et le Saint-Esprit tout ce que comporte dans ce qu'elle a de plus élevé l'union conjugale : 1) *une mutuelle donation* : dans l'Incarnation, Marie livre sa chair à la disposition de l'Esprit-Saint qui survient en elle pour la féconder admirablement ;³ 2) *une certaine communauté de vie* : si l'Esprit-Saint habite l'âme juste, à combien plus forte raison n'a-t-il pas habité celle de son Épouse. Il n'y habite pas seulement comme dans la plus excellente des âmes justes, mais comme dans la Mère du Christ-Chef, Mère de Jésus selon la chair et Mère de son Corps mystique ; 3) *un échange des biens* : l'Esprit-Saint a communiqué à Marie toutes ses richesses, comme elle-même s'est livrée tout entière à lui.

La grâce de Marie, déjà si élevée dès le premier instant de son Immaculée Conception, reçoit, à l'incarnation du Verbe en son sein, une plénitude qu'aucun critère humain ne peut apprécier. Bien que cette grâce soit nécessairement limitée, finie entitativement, elle échappe à toute mesure humaine. Il n'était que normal que Celle à qui la source même de la grâce est donnée pour être communiquée par elle au monde en reçoive, la première, une participation plus abondante.⁴

1. PIE IX, constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*.

2. « Agens a recta sui operis dispositione non recedit nisi propter aliquem ejus defectum. » *Compend. Theol.*, Pars IIa, cap.4, Marietti, n.552.

3. L'Incarnation, œuvre « ad extra », est de la Trinité entière, mais, par appropriation, attribuée au Saint-Esprit.

4. SAINT THOMAS dit : « Spiritus Sanctus datur secundum donum gratiae. » *Ia Pars*, q.43, a.3 ad 2. Si le Saint-Esprit est donné à raison même du don de la grâce, c'est dire que Marie, pleine de grâce, l'a aussi reçu en plénitude, dans toute la mesure possible à la créature, et selon la mission unique qui était sienne, en tant que Mère de Dieu et Mère du Corps mystique. C'est ce que SAINT LUC signifie : « Spiritus Sanctus superveniet in te. » (LUC, 1,35) qu'il complète par « Et virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi ». Comme le remarque F. CEUPPENS, O. P. : « expressiones « Spiritus Sanctus » et « Virtus Altissimi » ratione parallelismi, uti expressiones synonymicae sunt considerandae. » *Mariologia biblica*, p.74-75. Il y a lieu de souligner aussi avec SAINT ATHANASE (ad Serapionem, 1,4 ; PG 26, 536-537) que lorsqu'elle est sans article l'expression « Virtus Altissimi » n'est jamais employée pour signifier personnellement le Saint-Esprit, mais la puissance divine qui, par appropriation peut être dite du Saint-Esprit. Le P. STANISLAS LYONNET, S. J., dans une conférence sur le « Récit de l'Annonciation et la Maternité divine de la sainte Vierge » donnée à l'Institut biblique, à Rome, le 10 janv. 1954 (voir *L'Ami du clergé*, 19 janv.

Une union aussi étroite entre le Saint-Esprit et Marie pouvait seule rendre celle-ci capable d'une telle fécondité physique et spirituelle. Réduire, par suite, le rôle de Marie à celui de n'importe quel autre instrument serait une grave erreur.

Dans un des passages les plus profonds et les plus admirés de son *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la sainte Vierge*, saint Louis-Marie de Montfort écrit :

Dieu le Saint-Esprit, étant stérile en Dieu, c'est-à-dire ne produisant point d'autre personne divine, est devenu fécond par Marie qu'il a épousée. C'est avec elle et en elle et d'elle qu'il a produit son chef-d'œuvre qui est un Dieu fait homme et qu'il produit tous les jours jusqu'à la fin du monde

1956, pp.43 ss.) a étudié avec beaucoup d'érudition le sens de ce passage. Le verbe grec qui rend le sens de « obumbrabit tibi » et que nous traduisons par « te couvrira de son ombre » se retrouve dans un sens assez voisin mais non identique dans les Psaumes XC (XCI) 2 et 4, et CXXXIX (CXL), 8. Mais, remarque le P. LYONNET, « le même verbe grec apparaît en un sens beaucoup plus caractéristique et qui nous rapproche singulièrement du contexte de l'Annonciation, à la fin du Livre de l'*Exode*, (XL,35). Il y traduit le verbe hébreu *shakan*, « habiter » dont on sait la signification si profondément religieuse en Israël, notamment dans la formule technique : « faire habiter le nom divin », si bien que la Bible, pour désigner le lieu de l'habitation divine dira simplement « la Demeure » (*hammishkān*) que les Septante ont eu l'idée de rendre à l'aide d'un mot grec formé des mêmes consonnes que la racine hébraïque : *skéné* d'où la Vulgate « tabernaculum » et notre français « tabernacle » et l'on sait l'importance que prit dans le Judaïsme postérieur la notion de *shékina* ou d'« habitation » (divine), le mot étant devenu l'un des substituts usuels de Yahvé. » Nous avons relevé, plus haut, ce même mot de « tabernacle » appliqué à Marie par les Pères et repris par PIE IX dans *Ineffabilis Deus*. À la fin du Livre de l'*Exode*, après avoir raconté comment Moïse et Aaron érigèrent la « Demeure », l'écrivain sacré ajoute : « Operuit nubes tabernaculum testimonii, et gloria Domini implevit illud. Nec poterat Moyses ingredi tectum foederis, nube operiente omnia, et majestate Domini coruscante, quia cuncta nubes operuebat. » (*Exod.*, 40, 32-33). La nuée sera le symbole de la présence de Dieu auprès de son peuple. C'est dans la nuée qu'au désert il apparaît ; dans une nuée épaisse qu'il s'approche de Moïse, (*Exod.*, 19,9). À la Transfiguration, « une nuée survint et obumbravit eos », et ils eurent peur en entrant dans la nuée. (*Luc*, 9,34). « Cette présence divine, dit le P. LYONNET, qui avait jadis reposé sur le Tabernacle, empli la Demeure au point d'en interdire l'entrée à Moïse, puis habité le Temple de Jérusalem, ou plus exactement la partie la plus secrète de ce Temple, le Saint des Saints, cette présence qui devait enfin consacrer le Temple symbolique de l'ère messianique, voici que l'ange Gabriel déclare à Marie qu'elle va se réaliser et comme s'actualiser en son sein, transformant ce sein virginal en un sanctuaire, un Saint des Saints vivant, cette Présence divine que depuis son enfance elle avait appris à vénérer en un seul endroit de la terre, là où le grand-prêtre seul entraît une fois par an au grand jour de l'Expiation, l'ange Gabriel lui apprend aujourd'hui qu'elle doit désormais l'adorer en elle » (*loc. cit.*). On a fait remarquer également que Marie est désignée comme « Arche d'Alliance ». Le P. ERIC BURROWS, dans *The Gospel of Infancy*, Londres, 1940, p.56, dit que SAINT LUC met sur les lèvres d'Élisabeth des expressions semblables à celles de David accueillant l'Arche à Jérusalem. Autre rapprochement, l'Arche demeura trois mois chez Obed-Edom (*II Sam.*, 6,11) comme Marie à Hébron. Tous ces sens relevés dans l'Écriture, et le passage de SAINT LUC qui s'en rapproche, montrent bien à quel point l'Esprit-Saint a fait de Marie sa demeure privilégiée. Aucune créature n'a été plus remplie de Dieu, après l'Humanité sainte du Verbe incarné. Aucune n'est mieux désignée pour être un instrument privilégié de ses œuvres de grâce.

les prédestinés et les membres du corps de ce chef adorable : c'est pourquoi plus il trouve Marie, sa chère et indissoluble épouse, dans une âme, plus il devient opérant et puissant pour produire Jésus-Christ en cette âme et cette âme en Jésus-Christ.¹

C'est par suite de cette union incomparable que saint Louis-Marie de Montfort peut conclure :

La conduite que les trois Personnes de la très sainte Trinité ont tenue dans l'incarnation et le premier avènement de Jésus-Christ, elles la gardent tous les jours d'une manière invisible, dans la sainte Église. Dieu le Père se veut faire des enfants par Marie jusqu'à la consommation du monde. Dieu le Fils veut se former et, pour ainsi dire, s'incarner tous les jours par sa chère Mère, dans ses membres. Dieu le Saint-Esprit veut se former en elle et par elle des élus.²

Les rapports de Marie avec les Trois Personnes divines, et très particulièrement avec le Saint-Esprit, dépassent tout ce à quoi peut accéder quelque créature que ce soit, en dehors de l'Humanité sainte. Personne n'est plus apte non plus à devenir l'instrument des œuvres du salut.

2) *Rapports avec le Christ*

A) ASSOCIÉE INSÉPARABLE :

Les rapports de Marie avec les Personnes divines ne fondent cependant d'autre titre qu'une simple convenance à ce que Marie soit associée au Christ dans son œuvre rédemptrice. Marie est la plus

1. S. L.-M. DE MONTFORT explique : « Ce n'est pas qu'on veuille dire que la très sainte Vierge donne au Saint-Esprit la fécondité, comme s'il ne l'avait pas, puisque, étant Dieu, il a la fécondité ou la capacité de produire comme le Père et le Fils quoiqu'il ne la réduise pas à l'acte, ne produisant point d'autre personne divine. Mais on veut dire que le Saint-Esprit, par l'entremise de la sainte Vierge, dont il veut bien se servir, quoiqu'il n'en ait pas absolument besoin, réduit à l'acte sa fécondité, en produisant en elle et par elle Jésus-Christ et ses membres : mystère de grâce inconnu même aux plus savants et spirituels d'entre les chrétiens. » *Traité*, n.21. C'est par sa nature divine commune aux Trois Personnes que le Saint-Esprit est fécond et que sont réalisées toutes les œuvres *ad extra* qui lui sont attribuées, telle que l'Incarnation et la sanctification des âmes. En ce sens, le Saint-Esprit a fait de Marie son instrument comme s'il devenait fécond par elle. C'est Elle, au contraire, qui devient féconde par lui « qui veut bien se servir de son entremise », dit SAINT LOUIS-M. DE MONTFORT. PIE XII a rappelé : « Ac praeterea certissimum illud firma mente retineant, hisce in rebus omnia esse habenda sanctissimae Trinitati communia quatenus eadem Deum ut supremam efficientem causam respiciant. » Encyclique *Mystici corporis*, Denz. 2290. La fécondité appartenant à la nature divine, elle est égale et infinie en chacune des Personnes. Le Saint-Esprit a donc la même fécondité que les deux autres. Comme Personne, son propre est d'être spiré par le Père et le Fils. En cela, il épuise, peut-on dire, la puissance active du Père et du Fils et sa propre puissance passive qui, comme Esprit, est d'être spiré.

2. *Traité de la vraie dévotion*, *passim*, nos 22, 29, 31, 34.

digne des créatures à être son associée, pas davantage. Le salut est l'œuvre exclusive du Christ : « nec enim aliud nomen est sub cœlo datum hominibus, in quo oporteat nos salvos fieri. »¹ Le concept de Mère de Dieu et celui d'Associée ne s'incluent pas nécessairement.²

Même dans l'économie d'une Incarnation rédemptrice, la maternité divine pourrait être : a) une coopération éloignée et purement physique à cette rédemption ; b) une coopération soit éloignée, soit prochaine, mais connue et voulue comme telle, et non seulement physique. Il est clair que, dans le premier cas, il n'y aurait aucune coopération formelle à l'œuvre rédemptrice ; dans le deuxième, cette coopération pourrait : a) se borner à accepter d'être mère du Rédempteur ; b) s'étendre à tous les actes subséquents compris dans cette maternité. Pour l'ordinaire, une mère n'est pas engagée, du fait d'être mère, en tout ce qu'entreprend ensuite son fils. Marie accepte d'être mère de celui qui lui est présenté comme le Rédempteur et dont l'existence même doit commencer par son consentement. Elle est dès ce moment associée formellement au Rédempteur et à toute son œuvre.

À défaut de textes scripturaires où soit formellement affirmée cette association, le consentement de Marie, dont l'importance sera soulignée ailleurs, et maints autres passages où Marie apparaît aux côtés du Sauveur attestent implicitement cette association.³

Le Magistère, surtout depuis les dernières années, a souvent souligné cette association de la Mère et du Fils. Déjà en 1587, Sixte V montre la part de Marie par ses mérites : « Gloriosae et semper virginis Dei Genitrix Mariae salutiferam fecunditatem humiliter venerantes . . . et praeclara in universum genus humanum sed in nos potissimum merita, et verbia et factis . . . libentissime praedicamus. »⁴

Pie IX montre Marie prédestinée dans un même décret avec le Christ « et indissolubili vinculo cum eo conjuncta ».⁵ Cette doctrine s'accentuera chez Léon XIII où le « consortii principium apertissime

1. *Act.*, 4, 12.

2. « Ciertamente que la maternidad divina y el consorcio en la obra de la redención no son dos conceptos que natural y mutuamente se incluyan. » G. ALASTRUEY, *Tratado de la Virgen Santísima*, p.529.

3. Si, comme le disait Pie XII aux Mariologues, « les Écritures, tant dans les livres de l'Ancien Testament que dans ceux du Nouveau, disent explicitement beaucoup de choses remarquables sur la très sainte Vierge . . . » il est non moins vrai que le donné marial de l'Écriture est beaucoup plus riche qu'on ne le pense ordinairement. Ce serait, par suite, « s'éloigner grandement de la vérité, comme ajoute Pie XII, que de penser définir pleinement et expliquer correctement la dignité et la noblesse de la très sainte Vierge en partant seulement des saintes Écritures, sans assez tenir compte de la Tradition catholique et du Magistère sacré. » *Osservatore romano*, 5 nov. 1954, édit. française.

4. SIXTUS V, *Erectio capellae ad Praesepe* . . . in basilica S. Mariae Majoris, Boursassé, *Summa Aurea*, 7, Paris, 1866, col.126.

5. PIE IX, constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*.

affirmatur. »¹ « Revera primaevae labis expers Virgo, adlecta Dei Mater, et hoc ipso servandi hominum generis consors facta. »² « Cum filio Jesu Redemptionis humanae facta est particeps. »³

Saint Pie X étend cette association à toute l'économie surnaturelle : « Hinc porro in Scripturis sanctis, quotiescumque de futura in nobis gratia prophetatur : toties fere Servator hominum cum sanctissima ejus matre conjungitur. »⁴

Chez Pie XI : « Hisce denique votis inceptisque Nostris praesens arident Virgo Dei parens benignissima, quæ, cum Jesum nobis Redemptorem ediderit, aluerit, apud crucem hostiam obtulerit, per arcanam cum Christo conjunctionem ejusdemque gratiam omnino singularem, Reparatrix item exstitit pieque appellatur. »⁵

Pie XII use très fréquemment, surtout dans l'encyclique *Ad coeli Reginam* des expressions suivantes : « ex Dei placito sociata », « nova veluti Heva cum novo Adam consociata fuit », « utpote Christi mater, socia in divini Redemptoris opera. »⁶

Ces affirmations si nettes font écho à une longue Tradition où, sous une terminologie quelque peu différente, chez les Pères et autres écrivains ecclésiastiques, se rencontrent dans le même sens : *reparatrix*,⁷ *expatriatrix*,⁸ *diallaktérion* (réconciliation),⁹ *redemptrix*.¹⁰ Or il ne viendra à l'esprit de personne d'interpréter ces vocables dans un sens absolu comme si Marie était cause principale de salut. C'est donc uniquement à titre d'associée qu'elle a pu concourir à la rédemption. C'est d'ailleurs ce mot d'associée, rendu aussi par compagne, qui prévaudra jusqu'à devenir universellement admis aujourd'hui.¹¹

Marie n'est pas associée simplement de fait, mais par une prédestination éternelle ; elle ne l'est pas seulement pour une œuvre ou une période déterminée, mais pour toujours. Ces deux points ressortent en même temps de tous les témoignages.

Pie XI disait : « Il Redentore non poteva, per necessità di cose, non associare la Madre sua alla sua opera. »¹² Dans le même sens,

1. G. M. ROSCHINI, o. s. m., *Mariologia*, I, pp.73-74.

2. LÉON XIII, encyclique *Supremi apostolatus*.

3. *Idem*, lettre apostolique *Parta humano generi*.

4. SAINT PIE X, encyclique *Ad diem illum*.

5. PIE XI, encyclique *Miserentissimus Redemptor*.

6. PIE XII, encyclique *Ad coeli Reginam*.

7. *Oracional Visigotico* (Monumenta Hispaniae Sacra), Barcelona, 1946, p.67, n.202, cité par G. FRENAUD, *Marie et l'Église* I, dans *Bull. Soc. franç. d'Études mariales*, 1951, p.44.

8. *Analecta Hymnica*, de Dreve-Blume, IX, n.94, p.76.

9. S. ANDRÉ DE CRÈTE, *Serm. 3 in Dormit.*, PG 97, 1096 A.

10. Anonyme, x^e s., Psautier cathédrale de Salisbury, cité par R. LAURENTIN, *Le titre de corédemptrice*, p.49, réf. 53a.

11. « Compagne indissoluble de sa vie, de sa mort, de sa gloire, » S. LOUIS-M. DE MONTFORT, *Traité de la vraie dévotion*, n.74.

12. *Osservatore romano*, 1, 12, 1933 (20).

Pie XII unifie, sous cette raison, tous les titres et mystères de Marie : « Utpote Christi Dei mater, socia in divini Redemptoris opera. »¹ C'est également par suite de cette association, que Pie XII rappelle, par trois fois, dans le même passage, que Marie partagera l'excellence du Christ, qu'elle sera dispensatrice des grâces et participera à la puissance de son Fils.

Ex hac enim cum Christo Rege conjunctione splendorem celsitudinemque attingit... Ex hac cum Christo conjunctione regalis facultas oritur qua ipsa potest Divini Redemptoris Regni dispensare thesaures; ex hac denique cum Christo conjunctione materni ejus patrocinii... elicitur exhausta numquam efficacia.²

Bien que le mot soit absent chez saint Bernard, c'est bien la même idée d'association : « Merito in te respiciunt oculi totius creaturae, qui in te et per te et de te benigna manus Omnipotentis, quidquid creaverat, recreavit. »³

Ekbert de Schönau s'exprime ainsi : « Dominus tecum ut... sociam sibi te assiscens, ut complens tecum et in te opus salvificae incarnationis, quod neque sine ipso perfici potest, neque sine te perfici convenit. »⁴

Jean Halgrin d'Abbeville († 1237) parle de « inseparabile consortium matris et filii ».⁵ Saint Louis-M. de Montfort dit, dans le même sens : « Jésus-Christ l'ayant choisie pour la compagne indissoluble de sa vie, de sa mort, de sa gloire. »⁶ Il l'appelle ailleurs « la compagne indissoluble du Saint-Esprit pour tous ses ouvrages de grâce. »⁷

Compagne du Fils, Marie l'est également du Saint-Esprit « par une grâce singulière du Très-Haut », qui « lui ayant donné puissance sur son Fils unique et naturel, la lui a aussi donnée sur ses enfants adoptifs. »⁸

Nous n'avons pas à insister davantage pour le moment. Cette association se retrouvera tout au long de l'œuvre de Marie. Si elle n'est pas incluse dans le concept de la Maternité comme telle, la Maternité divine telle que réalisée ne peut pas être autre chose qu'une association du Fils et de la Mère. C'est ce qui apparaîtra encore dans le rôle de nouvelle Ève et celui de Corédemptrice.

1. PIE XII, encyclique *Ad coeli Reginam*.

2. *Ibid.*

3. S. BERNARD, *Ser. I in festo Pentecostes*, loc. cit., p.352.

4. *Super Missus est*, éd. F. M. E. ROTH, *Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth und die Schriften der Aebte Ekbert und Emenche*, Brunn, 1884, p.252.

5. *In Cant. II* (fin) PL 206, 156 D.

6. *Traité de la vraie dévotion*, n.74.

7. *Ibid.*, n.37.

8. S. LOUIS-M. DE MONTFORT, loc. cit., n.37.

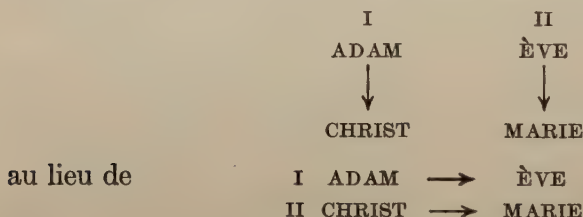
B) MARIE, NOUVELLE ÈVE :

Le parallèle Ève-Marie est de beaucoup antérieur aux expressions « associée » ou « compagne ». Celles-ci en sont plutôt une déduction,¹ tout comme du parallèle établi par saint Paul entre le Christ et Adam, est venu celui de la nouvelle Ève par rapport à la première Ève.²

Le parallèle Ève-Marie n'est pas seulement une réplique harmonieuse de celui d'Adam et du Christ. Il a un fondement justifié par l'Écriture et l'interprétation de l'Église. Le plan divin de la Rédemption correspond à celui de la chute, non par nécessité, mais par une très haute convenance, tout comme il convenait, afin que « melius et convenientius » soit effectué le salut, qu'il vînt par quelqu'un de la race humaine.³

C'est ainsi que saint Irénée, après avoir montré comment, par la désobéissance du premier homme, l'homme a perdu la vie, et par l'obéissance d'un autre homme, le Christ, il a retrouvé le salut, écrit : « Et quomodo per virginem, quae non obediebat, percussus est homo et lapsus mortuus est, eo modo et per virginem, quae obedivit verbo Dei, rursus vita renovatus homo obtinuit vitam. »⁴

Il est à remarquer que saint Irénée n'établit pas le parallèle entre Adam et Ève, ni entre le Christ et Marie, sur ce que nous appellerions un plan horizontal, c'est-à-dire simultané. Il le fait plutôt entre Adam et le Christ, et entre Ève et Marie, sur un plan vertical, c'est-à-dire descendant. Nous avons ainsi :



Ce faisant, saint Irénée montre l'existence de deux ordres qui n'ont pas la même valeur. Le parallèle I n'est pas égal au parallèle II. Ève ne joue pas le rôle d'Adam, ni Marie, celui du Christ. Il n'y a

1. La première origine de ce parallélisme est discutée, à savoir s'il faut l'attribuer à SAINT JUSTIN, *Dialogue avec Tryphon*, ou à SAINT IRÉNÉE, *Adversus haereses*, ou à TERTULLIEN, *Adversus Marcionem*. Le sens actuel de Marie, associée du Christ, comme Ève associée d'Adam, s'est fixé vers le XII^e siècle. « Les Pères n'ont pas aperçu toutes les conséquences des principes qu'ils posaient, mais ils ont posé les principes. » H. COATHALEM, S. J., *Le parallélisme entre la Vierge et l'Église dans la Tradition latine jusqu'à la fin du XIII^e siècle*, Rome, 1939, cité par H. HOLSTEIN, S. J. « Marie et l'Église chez les Pères anténicéens », *Marie et l'Église I*, dans *Bull. de la Soc. franç. d'Études mariales*, 1951, p.12.

2. « Per hominem mors, et per hominem resurrectio mortuorum. Sicut in Adam omnes moriuntur, ita et in Christo omnes vivificabuntur. » *I Cor.*, 15, 21-22.

3. *IIIa*, q.1, a.2, c.

4. *Epideixis*, cc.31-33 ; PO 12,683-5.

identification morale qu'entre Adam et le Christ, et entre Ève et Marie, et non pas entre Adam et Ève, ni entre le Christ et Marie. Le Christ est antitype d'Adam ; Marie est antitype d'Ève.

En passant sous silence les rapports d'Adam et d'Ève, comme ceux du Christ et de Marie, saint Irénée ne les exclut pas pour autant. Il les sous-entend ; ce qui apparaît au seul fait qu'après avoir établi un parallèle entre Adam et le Christ, il en établit un second entre Ève et Marie. Cela n'aurait aucune raison d'être si Adam et Ève, ou le Christ et Marie, étaient étrangers l'un à l'autre. C'est donc reconnaître implicitement qu'entre Adam et Ève, comme entre le Christ et Marie, il y eut une action commune dans l'œuvre de la chute et dans celle du salut.¹

Dans la pensée de saint Irénée, le Christ et Marie, comme Adam et Ève, sont vraiment causes dans le rachat comme dans la chute, respectivement. Il y a donc, de par la volonté de Dieu, entre le Christ et Marie, une association semblable à celle qui existe entre Adam et Ève. En disant semblable, nous ne disons pas nécessairement identique en tous points. Saint Thomas nous avertit qu'en ces matières : « Licet veritas respondeat figurae quantum ad aliquid, non tamen quantum ad omnia, quia oportet quod veritas figuram excedat. »² Saint Jean Damascène dit de même : « Non necesse est omnifariam et indefective assimilari exempla ; quod enim est in omnibus simile, idem utique erit, et non exemplum. »³

C'est donc dans ses lignes essentielles qu'il faut comparer cette association du Christ et de Marie avec celle d'Adam et d'Ève. De même qu'un homme et une femme ont participé à la ruine commune, un homme et une femme participent au rachat de tous. Le plan rédempteur reprend dans le Christ et Marie, nouvel Adam et nouvelle Ève, l'œuvre renversée par le premier Adam et la première Ève. La revanche divine éclate encore davantage de cette manière comme le dit saint Thomas citant saint Augustin : « Poterat Deus hominem

1. Le P. PRZYBYLSKI note pertinemment : « Nec Maria nec Eva appellatur « initium » generis humani lapsi vel regenerati, sicut expresse S. Auctor de Adam et Christo dicit : « ipse (Christus) initium viventium factus, quoniam Adam initium morientium factus est. » Attamen, licet Eva non vocetur « protoplasma », certe est causa universalis et immediata mortis omnium hominum (« et sibi et universo generi humano causa facta est mortis »), similiter et Maria, licet non appellatur « primogenita », certe est causa universalis et immediata salutis hominum (« et sibi et universo generi humano causa facta est salutis »). Le Père ajoute : « Irenaei doctrina indubia his exprimi potest verbis : Adam et Evam fuisse causae universales et immediatae mortis generis humani, Christum vero, et Mariam esse causas universales et immediatas salutis generis humani. Quomodo autem istae causae, Evae scilicet et Adae, Mariae et Christi, ad invicem se habeant, Irenaeus ne verbo explicat . . . Irenaeus certo certius et Christo et Mariae veram causalitatem salutis adscribit, at utrum in sensu moderno « concausae », impossibile est determinare. » *De Mariologia sancti Irenaei Lugdunensis*, pp.68-71.

2. *IIIa*, q.48, a.3, ad 1.

3. *Orth. fidei*. III, 3, cap.26, cité in *IIIa*, q.2, a.6, ad 1.

aliunde suscipere, non de genere istius Adae, qui suo peccato obligavit genus humanum : sed melius iudicavit ut de ipso quod victum fuerat genere assumeret hominem Deus, per quem generis humani vinceret inimicum. » ¹

Saint Bernard dit de même :

Sic nimirum prudentissimus et elementissimus artifex, quod quassatum fuerat, non confregit sed utilius omnino refectioni, ut videlicet nobis novum formaret Adam ex veteri et Evam transfunderet in Mariam. Et quidem sufficere poterat Christus, siquidem et nunc omnis sufficientia nostra ex eo est, sed nobis bonum non erat esse hominem solum : congruum magis, ut adesset nostrae reparationi sexus uterque, quorum corruptioni neuter defuisset.²

Adam est seul auteur de notre perte. Ayant reçu la justice originelle non seulement à titre personnel mais en tant que premier principe de la nature humaine, la perte de cette justice n'engage pas seulement la condition personnelle d'Adam, mais aussi celle de toute sa race. C'est ce qu'affirme exactement saint Thomas :

Qui quidem status primo homini concessus non ut cuidam personae singulari, sed ut primo humanae naturae principio, ita quod per ipsum simul cum natura humana traduceretur in posteros.³

Primum peccatum primi parentis sustulit donum totum quod supernaturaliter erat collatum in humana natura personae primi parentis, et sic dicitur corrupisse vel infecisse naturam.⁴

Si Adam est seul responsable de la chute, Ève n'y est cependant pas étrangère. Saint Thomas affirme : « A muliere initium factum est et per illam omnes morimur (*Eccli.*, 25,33), hoc est per illam Evam sc. suggerentem », marquant bien la différence avec Adam « sicut causantem ».⁵ Le péché d'Ève n'a donc pas été indifférent. Il a préparé en quelque manière celui d'Adam qui, seul, nous a perdus. Même en répartissant la responsabilité de chacun, il y a lieu de les considérer, en quelque manière, comme un principe total, ainsi que le fait saint Thomas :

*Primi parentes sunt instituti a Deo non solum sicut quaedam personae singulares, sed sicut quaedam principia totius humanae naturae ab eis in posteros derivandae simul cum beneficio divino praeservante a morte. Et ideo per eorum peccatum tota humana natura in posteris tali beneficio destituta, mortem incurrit.*⁶

1. *IIIa*, q.4, a.6, c.

2. *De duodecim praerogativis beatae Mariae Virginis*, loc. cit., p.172.

3. *Compend. Theol.*, cap.187, Marietti, Taurini, n.364.

4. *Ibid.*, n.375.

5. *In I Cor.*, 15, lect.3, Vivès, Paris, 1870, p.444.

6. *IIa IIae*, q.164, a.1, ad 3.

Un homme et une femme ont participé à la ruine commune : un homme et une femme ont participé au rachat de tous. De même qu'Adam seul est auteur de la perte du genre humain, le Christ seul est Auteur du salut. Mais de même qu'Ève a participé, par sa sollicitation, au péché du premier homme et est devenue cause de notre perte, de même Marie, par son consentement a été cause de notre salut. C'est toujours ce qu'ont souligné les Pères. Saint Cyrille de Jérusalem écrit : « Per Virginem Evam subiit mors : oportebat per Virginem, seu potius de Virgine prodire vitam : ut sicut illam decepit serpens ita et huic Gabriel bonum nuntium afferret. »¹

Plus explicite est saint Épiphane : « Si exteriora dumtaxat et sensibus obvia consideres, ab eadem hac Eva totius est in terris humani generis origo deducta. Revera tamen a Maria Virgine vita ipsa est in mundum introducta, ut viventem pariat et viventium Maria sit Mater. »²

Or dans le parallélisme entre Adam et Ève, et entre le Christ et Marie, il faut noter :

1.— *la supériorité de l'ordre nouveau sur le précédent :*

Il y a plus de gloire et de mérite à exécuter ce qui est difficile que ce qui est moindre. Ainsi, il est plus glorieux et méritoire de conquérir un bien que de le perdre.³ La vie divine n'est pas seulement quelque chose de difficile, mais quelque chose d'impossible aux seules forces de la nature : « nulla natura potest supra seipsam ». ⁴ Si Adam, à titre de chef de l'humanité, était responsable du don de la justice originelle qui lui avait été accordé et pour lui-même et pour toute sa descendance, il devenait absolument incapable, une fois ce don perdu, de le recouvrer ni pour lui-même ni pour les autres. Ni pour lui-même, parce que l'ordre surnaturel est au-delà des capacités purement naturelles ; ni pour les autres, car ses actes n'avaient plus désormais qu'une portée personnelle et devenaient insuffisants pour étendre leur valeur à toute la nature et lui assurer une réparation adéquate.

Quamvis autem peccatum primi parentis totam humanam naturam infecerit, non tamen potuit per ejus poenitentiam vel quodcumque ejus meritum tota natura reparari. Manifestum est enim quod poenitentia Adae, vel quodcumque aliud ejus meritum, fuit actus singularis personae, actum autem alicujus individui non potest in totam naturam speciei.

1. *Catéchèse*, 12, 15, PG 33, 742.

2. *Adv. haeresea panarium*, 78 ; *Adv. Antidicomarianitas*, 18 ; PG 42, 727 sq.

3. « Perfectio autem potentiae non attenditur in qualicumque operatione sed in operatione quae habet aliquam magnitudinem aut difficultatem. Quaelibet enim potentia, quantumcumque imperfecta, potest in aliquam operationem modicam et debilem. » *IIa IIae*, q.129, a.2, c.

4. *Ia IIae*, q.109, a.3, ad 2.

Causae enim quae possunt in totam speciem, sunt causae aequivocae, et non univocae.¹

Il faut donc au Christ une supériorité sur Adam pour réparer. Or cette supériorité est affirmée par saint Paul : « Per hominem mors, et per hominem resurrectio mortuorum. Et sicut in Adam omnes moriuntur, ita et in Christo omnes vivificabuntur. »²

Cette supériorité éclate encore en ceci que la vie communiquée par le Christ à le Christ même pour auteur, à titre principal, comme Dieu, et à titre de cause instrumentale, comme homme : « Vivificare tam animas quam corpora attribuitur divinitati Verbi sicut principaliter agenti, humanitati vero sicut instrumento. »³

Cette supériorité apparaît encore en ce que le Christ élève l'homme à un état supérieur : « Donum Christi est potentius quam delictum Adae, quia restituit homines in altiore statum quam Adae ante peccatum habuit, scilicet statum gloriae, qui est absque periculo peccandi. »⁴

Cette supériorité n'est pas seulement transcendante quant à la substance de l'œuvre, mais encore quant à son mode.

a) la réparation s'est opérée dans notre propre nature : « in similitudinem hominum factus et habitu inventus ut homo. »⁵

b) par une nature extraite de la descendance même d'Adam : « misit Deus Filium suum factum ex muliere. »⁶

c) la femme devient, à son tour, un agent de la réparation, une « adjutorium simile sibi », à côté du nouvel Adam.

Saint Paul peut donc légitimement conclure : « Sed non sicut delictum, ita et donum : si enim unius delicto multi mortui sunt, multo magis gratia Dei et donum in gratia unius hominis Jesu Christi in plures abundavit. »⁷

2.— la supériorité particulière de la nouvelle Ève sur la première :

La supériorité de Marie par rapport à Ève est en proportion de celle du Christ par rapport à Adam. Le rôle d'une parfaite « adjutorium » l'exige. Nous pouvons y voir entre autres différences :

a) Ève a concouru de façon indirecte et matérielle à la chute du genre humain, qu'elle ne voulait pas comme telle. Marie a concouru

1. *Compend. Theol.*, cap.198, Marietti, n.376.

2. *I Cor.*, 15, 21-22.

3. *De Verit.*, q.29, a.4, ad 1.

4. *De Malo*, q.4, a.6, ad 7. PIE IX, dans la constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*, dit expressément : « quod in primo Adamo casurum erat, in secundo felicius erigeretur. »

5. *Phil.*, 2, 7.

6. *Gal.*, 4, 4 ; *IIIa*, q.1, a.2, c.

7. *Rom.*, 5, 15.

directement et formellement à la rédemption qu'elle a voulue de toute l'ardeur de sa volonté.

b) Ève agit par faiblesse, en se laissant séduire. Il est plus facile, avons-nous dit, de faire un acte moindre qu'un acte supérieur, de perdre un bien que de le conquérir. Marie, par la vertu du Très-Haut, est élevée à produire, en union avec le Saint-Esprit, la venue au monde du Rédempteur.

c) Ève, par sa propre séduction, ne peut tout au plus exercer qu'une influence morale sur Adam, et conditionner ainsi, par le libre consentement de celui-ci, la perte du genre humain. Marie, par son « fiat », conditionne l'existence même du Rédempteur et donne au monde le principe du salut.

L'ordre général de la Rédemption nous apparaît encore supérieur en ceci que Marie, associée au Christ en ceci comme dans le reste, mérite avec lui, en quelque manière, la grâce qui est restituée à l'homme. Ce mérite, de parfaite condignité pour le Christ, en qualité de Fils de Dieu, est pour Marie un mérite de la plus haute convenance en qualité de Mère de Dieu, associée de son Fils Rédempteur. « Ea tamen, quoniam universis sanctitate praestat conjunctioneque cum Christo, atque a Christo, ascita in humanae salutis opus, de congruo, ut aiunt, promeret nobis quae Christus de condigno promeruit.¹

La grâce que possédait Adam et qu'il aurait transmise à sa descendance, était de Dieu, non de lui. Le péché, par contre, vient de lui. C'est bien ainsi que saint Thomas dit :

Principium peccati est ex nobis, principium autem boni meritorii est ex Deo ; unde in Adam fuit aliquod bonum quod potuit omnibus communicari, scilicet originalis justitia, quam tamen a Deo habuit ; sed malum quod in alios transmittit habuit ex se ipso, ut potius dici possit quod Deus fuisset transfusor boni : homo autem est transfusor mali.²

Ce que nous disons du Christ, auteur de la grâce redonnée à l'homme, nous pouvons le dire proportionnellement de Marie, nouvelle Ève, qui a mérité, en quelque manière, cette même grâce avec Lui.

À tout point de vue, le nouvel Adam et la nouvelle Ève sont incomparablement supérieurs aux premiers. Comme l'enseigne saint Irénée, ils sont respectivement cause universelle et immédiate du salut, comme Adam et Ève l'avaient été de la perte. Comment serait-il à croire que cette solidarité ne se poursuive jusqu'au bout des œuvres divines ?

C) MARIE, CORÉDEMPTRICE :

Par corédemptrice, nous entendons le fait d'être coopératrice dans la Rédemption.

1. S. PIE X, encyclique *Ad diem illum*.

2. *De Malo*, q.4, a.6, ad 19.

Abstraction faite du mode de coopération de Marie à la Rédemption, à savoir si elle est immédiate ou médiate, objective ou subjective, cette doctrine est théologiquement certaine.¹

Comme notre intention n'est pas de traiter *ex professo* de ce point, sinon pour les besoins de notre travail, nous nous contenterons d'en établir la preuve scripturaire par un seul texte, celui de l'Annonciation, dont la portée sotériologique a rallié l'unanimité des théologiens.²

Le « fiat », en effet, par sa virtualité, contient toute la corédemption. C'est ainsi que l'ont compris les premiers Pères.³ Le Magistère a maintes fois rappelé, en termes très nets, la portée de ce consentement de Marie.

Léon XIII écrit : « Quum enim se Deo vel ancillam ad matris officium exhibuit vel tam in Filio in templo devovit, utroque ex facto, jam tunc consors cum eo exstitit laboriosae pro humano genere expiationis. »⁴

Pie XII, s'exprimant en français, déclarait :

Si elle mérite de donner au monde le Sauveur, n'est-ce pas parce qu'elle fut toujours, depuis le premier instant de son existence, et en particulier à l'heure de son consentement explicite aux desseins de Dieu sur elle-même,

1. C. LARNICOL, *De Verbo Incarnato et de R. V. Maria*, p.217.

2. « In « fiat » incarnationis, passio et mors Christi in germine continebatur ». P. BORZI, *Maria hominum coredeptrix*, Brugis, 1931, p.45. On pourra discuter sur les connaissances que pouvait avoir Marie touchant les annonces faites dans la sainte Écriture sur le Messie à venir, connaissances qui, chez les rabbins, étaient singulièrement rétrécies par leurs préjugés. Comme le remarque le P. LAGRANGE : « Pris dans son ensemble, le judaïsme rabbinique a fermé les yeux aux textes qui faisaient présager les souffrances du Messie ». *Le messianisme chez les Juifs*, Paris, 1909, p.239-240. *Le judaïsme avant Jésus-Christ*, Paris, 1931, p.385. J. RIVIÈRE hésite à croire que le consentement de Marie « ait comporté pour elle tout ce qu'il comporte aujourd'hui pour nous. » *Questions mariales d'actualité*, extrait des *Sciences religieuses*, 1932, p.97. Devant une mission aux dimensions de la sienne, il serait pour le moins étrange que Dieu n'ait pas donné à Marie des lumières appropriées. Nous croyons plus vraisemblable la position du P. LEBRETON quand il écrit : « On peut, sans témérité, affirmer que Dieu qui aimait Marie et la respectait infiniment, ne l'a pas engagée à son insu dans la voie du Calvaire. Quand Siméon lui prédit un an plus tard qu'un glaive lui transpercerait l'âme, il ne fit sans doute que lui rappeler des révélations plus intimes. » *La vie et l'enseignement de Jésus-Christ*, I, Paris, 1931, p.37.

3. « L'importance attachée à l'incarnation par les Pères de l'Église a donné lieu parfois à quelque malentendu. Des historiens du dogme un peu trop pressés leur ont attribué une doctrine de l'incarnation rédemptrice par elle-même, qu'ils ont opposée à la doctrine, paulienne et médiévale, de la redemption par la mort du Christ... Certes pour les Pères, l'incarnation est rédemptrice, mais parce que l'incarnation comme ils l'entendent inclut la Croix. » LOUIS BOUYER, *Le Trône de la Sagesse*, pp.229, 230. La Tradition patristique a ignoré le terme corédemptrice, mais de bien d'autres façons l'idée en est présentée. P. HOFFER en fait remonter le mot vers 1650. *Redemptrix*, plus courant jusqu'au XII^e siècle disparut vers le XIX^e siècle. Voir R. LAURENTIN, *Le titre de corédemptrice*, Marianum, Rome, 1951, pp.6, 16, 17.

4. Encyclique *Jucunda semper*.

remplie de l'Esprit-Saint, accueillant sans hésiter les intentions divines à son égard et y répondant sans réserve.¹

Pie XII parle expressément de « consentement explicite » aux « desseins de Dieu sur elle ». On ne peut marquer davantage la portée d'un tel acte. C'est bien à ce « fiat » de Marie que Dieu a lié, de toute éternité, l'Incarnation de son Fils, mais non pas cependant au sens où un refus rendrait vain le plan rédempteur.² L'efficacité souveraine de la volonté divine et le libre concours de la cause seconde sont parfaitement harmonisés.³

Cette volonté de Marie, exprimée dans son « fiat », rencontre à ce moment précis celle du Verbe qui assume en elle la nature humaine. Pour le Verbe incarné et pour Marie, il n'y a qu'une même volonté rédemptrice. Nous pourrions même dire le concours formel de trois volontés : la volonté éternelle et salvatrice de Dieu, celle du Verbe Incarné qui reçoit son existence en ce moment, enfin celle de Marie. Or l'objet de ces trois volontés est identique : « In qua voluntate sanctificati . . . per oblationem corporis Jesu Christi. »⁴

Plus encore, Marie remplit, au nom de l'humanité tout entière, un rôle officiel qui éclipse par sa valeur universelle le rôle de la première femme. Ève, en effet, n'agit qu'à un titre purement personnel, même si sa chute, indirectement, a des répercussions sur le genre humain tout entier. Marie, au contraire, est officiellement choisie par Dieu qui délègue un ange auprès d'elle, et comme investie d'une fonction représentative pour traiter l'affaire de notre salut. Ce n'est, par suite, que de façon médiate et indirecte que Ève, par son consentement à la suggestion du serpent, est cause de la chute. C'est immédiatement et directement que Marie est cause de notre salut. Si saint Thomas appelle Ève « instrument » de la tentation,⁵ combien plus Marie n'est-elle pas instrument de la rédemption ?

1. Allocution à la Section féminine du Comité international pour l'unité et l'universalité de la Culture, 26 janv. 1956.

2. C'est en ce sens que SCHEEBEN écrit : « Cette collaboration de Marie inclut une véritable dépendance de toute l'œuvre rédemptrice vis-à-vis de la volonté voulue et ordonnée de Dieu. La réalisation de l'œuvre n'est pas exposée, car Dieu en l'ordonnant ordonne aussi l'accord de Marie. Il ne faut donc pas insister sur cette dépendance au point de dire que si Marie n'avait pas donné son accord la rédemption n'aurait pas eu lieu. Cela ferait croire que Dieu n'a pas voulu réaliser la rédemption d'une volonté absolue, ou qu'il n'a pas eu la puissance d'assurer le consentement de Marie ou que Marie a collaboré avec Dieu d'une façon aussi indépendante qu'un homme le fait avec un autre. » *La mère virgine du Sauveur*, p.179.

3. « Cum igitur voluntas divina sit efficacissima, non solum sequitur quod fiant ea quae Deus vult fieri : sed quod eo modo fiant, quo Deus fieri vult. » *Ia*, q.19, a.8, c.

4. Le texte complet de ce passage est celui-ci : « Hostiam et oblationem noluisti, corpus autem aptasti mihi : holocaustomata et pro peccato, non tibi placuerunt, tunc dixi : Ecce venio, ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam : aufert primum, ut sequens statuatur. In qua voluntate sanctificati sumus per oblationem corporis Jesu Christi. » *Heb.*, 10, 5-10.

5. « Quasi instrumentum tentationis. » *IIa IIae*, q.165, a.2, ad 1.

Léon XIII confirme de son autorité le texte de saint Thomas :

Filius Dei aeternus, quum, ad hominis redemptionem et decus hominis naturam vellet suscipere, eaque re mysticum quoddam cum universo humano genere initurus esset connubium, non id ante perfecit quum liberri-ma consensio accessisset designatae Matris, quae ipsius generis humani personam quodammodo agebat, ed eam illustrem verissimanque Aquinatis sententiam : Per annuntiationem expectabatur consensus Virginis, loco totius humanae naturae.¹

Si la Rédemption a la Trinité comme cause première et éloignée, elle appartient cependant immédiatement au Christ, en tant qu'homme, comme cause prochaine, parce qu'il est seul à en verser le prix.² Mais dans le Christ, la personne qui répare est une personne divine. La personne humaine, comme telle, ne participe pas activement à la Rédemption alors que c'est le péché de la personne qui a entaché la nature. Le consentement de Marie est donné au nom de la nature humaine entière, mais comme il est le consentement d'une personne créée, il apporte dans l'œuvre rédemptrice la contribution active de la personne humaine comme telle. En ce sens, saint Thomas disait : « Per annuntiationem expectabatur consensus Virginis » (acte d'une personne humaine), loco totius humanae naturae ». Le saint Docteur dit lui-même ailleurs : « actus singularis personae . . . in multitudinis salutem redundans, immo totius humani generis »,³ expression reprise par Léon XIII, dans le texte cité ci-haut : « ipsius generis humani personam quodammodo agebat ».

On peut donc dire que

si le Christ s'est associé la Vierge dans l'instauration de l'ordre nouveau, auquel fut ordonné l'ancien, une personne humaine est cause au principe même de l'ordre de rédemption . . . La Personne du Christ, étant divine, est cause principale de la rédemption, tandis que sa nature humaine est l'instrument de cette divinité . . . En revanche, la personne même de Marie est cause instrumentale de la justification.⁴

1. Encyclique *Octobri mense*, dans *Lettres apostoliques*, 3, p.96.

2. « Esse immediate Redemptorem, proprium est Christi, inquantum est homo ; quamvis ipsa redemptio possit attribui Trinitati sicut primae causae. » *IIIa*, q.48, a.5, c.

3. *In III Sent.*, d.3, a.2, ad 2 qc., sol.2.

4. CH. DE KONINCK, *La part de la personne humaine dans l'œuvre de la rédemption*, dans *Laval théol. et philos.*, X, n° 1, 1954, pp.52-53. L'auteur se pose la question : « Mais quel est alors l'ordre de ces causalités, ordre de subordination qui fait leur unité ? L'Humanité du Verbe est un instrument uni à la divinité . . . Le pouvoir de la Vierge . . . ne peut pas s'assimiler à la causalité des instruments « extrinsèques » que sont les ministres de l'Église, qui dispensent les sacrements, mais qui ne sont cependant que des instruments « séparés ». Au contraire, c'est selon sa personne tout entière que Marie est unie au Rédempteur, à des titres qui sont siens en propre, savoir : la maternité divine ainsi que tous les privilèges et toutes les grâces dont elle est le siège. » *Ibid.* SCHEEBEN voit dans le rôle de Marie l'in-

Si, comme nous l'avons dit, le « fiat » contenait virtuellement toute la Corédemption, s'il y a continuité et unité essentielle entre l'Incarnation et le Calvaire, cela ne signifie pas que celui-ci n'ajoute rien de plus que le point final à la ligne. Il est le complément et la dernière perfection de ce qui a été commencé à l'Incarnation, tout comme la Passion et la mort du Christ sont ce qui achève notre réconciliation. « Reconciliati sumus Deo per mortem Filii ejus. » ¹

Illud « fiat » nempe incarnationis, illud « fiat » quod in incarnatione dedit, juxta crucem perfecit. Consensus Mariae in incarnationem Salvatoris est *elementum constitutivum essentielle sed inchoativum* maternitatis spiritualis, cooperatio ad passionem Christi et mortem *elementum integrale et completivum*.²

Une exigence intrinsèque de sa maternité orientait donc Marie vers le Calvaire.

Ita consecratur et conjungitur ad ordinem Verbi Incarnati, ut adveniente Passione Christi, Maria esset quasi indissolubiliter et necessario victima suae divinae maternitatis, ejusque sacrificium quamdam universalitatem attingeret in merendo et satisfaciendo, utpote necessario derivans ex munere vere universali, sc. maternitate divina.³

L'association de Marie au Christ comme nouvelle Ève et corédemptrice est donc incomparable. Si la grâce du Christ, comme Tête du Corps mystique, peut rejaillir sur tous ses membres, quelque chose d'analogue, bien qu'inférieur, résulte pour Marie de son rôle de corédemptrice. Il y a, en effet, un lien intime entre la répartition de la grâce et son mérite. C'est ce que Léon XIII signifiait après avoir rappelé le rôle de Marie dans l'Incarnation, comme représentante de la nature humaine tout entière : « Ex quo non minus vere proprieque affirmare licet, nihil prorsus de permagno illo omnis gratiae thesauro, quem attulit Dominus... nihil nobis, nisi per Mariam, Deo sic volente, impetiri. » ⁴

tention divine « d'accorder, non seulement à une nature créée, mais encore à une personne créée, l'honneur de collaborer à son œuvre la plus élevée, afin de rendre plus riche et plus harmonieuse la diversité et l'ordonnance graduée des dons de la grâce. » *Loc. cit.*, p.175.

1. *Rom.*, 5, 10. « Christus Dominus meruit in primo instanti suae incarnationis vere et proprie, Christus Dominus non tantum meruit in primo instanti suae conceptionis, sed etiam alio toto tempore vitae suae mortalis per plures passiones, et actiones, et praecipue per mortem suam. » J. DE S.-THOMAS, *Curs. theol.*, VIII, q.19, aa. 6 et 7.

2. F. CEUPPENS, O. P., *De Mariologia Biblica*, p.201.

3. N. GARCÍA GARCÉS, C. M. F., *Mater Corredemptrix*, p.175. SAINT LOUIS-MARIE DE MONTFORT, montrant l'union de Jésus avec Marie en tous ses mystères écrit : « Jusqu'à sa mort, où elle devait assister, pour ne faire avec elle qu'un même sacrifice ». *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la sainte Vierge*, n.18.

4. LÉON XIII, encyclique *Octobri mense*.

Or c'est de son rôle de corédemptrice par son « fiat » déjà que le pape conclut à sa juridiction dans l'œuvre de la grâce : « ex quo. . . »

Saint Bernard reconnaît cette surabondance de la grâce de Marie :

Invenisti enim gratiam apud Dominum (LUC, 1, 30). Quantam gratiam? Gratiam plenam, gratiam singularem. Singularem, an generalem? Utramque sine dubio quia plenam, et eo singularem quo generalem : ipsa enim generalem singulariter accepisti ; eo — inquam — singularem quo generalem, non sola prae omnibus gratiam invenisti. Singularem, quod sola hanc invenieris plenitudinem ; generalem, quod de ipsa plenitudine accipiunt universi.¹

Dans son Commentaire sur la Salutation angélique, saint Thomas parle dans le même sens : « Magnum enim est in quolibet sancto, quando habet tantum de gratia quod sufficit ad salutem multorum ; sed quando haberet tantum quod sufficeret ad salutem omnium hominum de mundo, hoc esset maximum : et hoc est in Christo, et in Beata Virgine. »²

Pour toutes ces raisons, certains théologiens ont vu de réelles affinités entre la grâce capitale du Christ et la grâce de Marie. Suarez dit : « B. Virgo participat illam dignitatem. »³

Des relations de Marie avec le Christ comme indissoluble associée, nouvelle Ève et corédemptrice, il ressort clairement qu'aucune créature, dans quelque ordre que ce soit, n'a participé aussi intimement à l'œuvre même du salut. Si la dispensation de la grâce est en proportion de son acquisition, il faut dire qu'aucune créature ne peut être non plus sur le même plan que Marie, non seulement quant à la puissance de son intercession, mais aussi quant à l'efficience de son action.

3) Rapports avec l'Église

En Marie se sont vérifiées autant qu'il est possible à une pure créature les notes essentielles de la Médiation du Christ. Ainsi nous l'a manifesté son rôle d'associée des Personnes divines elles-mêmes et du Verbe incarné.

A) L'IMMUTABILITÉ DU PLAN RÉDEMPTEUR :

L'unité de l'économie du salut tient à l'agencement organique de ses parties, de sorte que l'on peut dire que l'Église continue la Rédemption. En effet, comme le dit Pie XII : « Ecclesia veluti plenitudo

1. *In festo Annuntiat. Serm.3, loc. cit. p.262.*

2. *In Salut. Angelicam Expositio*, Opusc. II, Marietti, n.1118.

3. *De Verbo Incarnato*, q.38, a.4, disp.18, sect.4, n.13.

constituatur ut complementum Redemptoris ; Christus vero quoad omnia in Ecclesia quodammodo adimpleatur. » ¹

La condition du Corps mystique sur terre exige qu'il en soit ainsi, le Christ n'appliquant que successivement à ses membres, à mesure qu'ils apparaissent dans le temps, sa vertu vivifiante. C'est ainsi que saint Thomas écrit :

Mors enim Christi est quasi quaedam universalis causa salutis, sicut peccatum primi hominis fuit quasi universalis causa damnationis. Oportet autem universalem causam applicari ad unumquodque specialiter, ut effectum universalis causae participet. Effectus igitur peccati primi parentis pervenit ad unumquemque per carnis originem ; effectus autem mortis Christi pertingit ad unumquemque per spiritualem regenerationem, per quam homo Christo quodammodo conjungitur et incorporatur. ²

Or si Marie, dans ce plan rédempteur, a eu en compagnie du Sauveur un rôle de premier ordre, n'y aurait-il pas maintenant une brisure de ce plan initial si, dans la dispensation des biens du salut, elle n'avait pas encore, à côté du Christ, un rôle proportionné à celui qu'elle eut dans leur acquisition ? Or, même si la pure libéralité divine fut à l'origine de ce choix de Marie, ni du côté de Dieu, ni du côté de Marie, cet ordre ne peut désormais changer : ni du côté de Dieu, parce qu'il est immuable : « In quolibet autem immutabile, si semel est aliquid, non potest postmodum non inesse ; » ³ ni du côté de Marie, parce que prédestinée de toute éternité et préparée de façon exceptionnelle par son Immaculée-Conception, Marie devait correspondre, avec une indéfectible fidélité, à ce qui lui était demandé. Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort écrit :

La conduite que les trois Personnes de la très sainte Trinité ont tenue dans l'Incarnation et le premier avènement de Jésus-Christ, elles la gardent tous les jours d'une manière invisible, dans la sainte Église, et la garderont jusqu'à la consommation des siècles, dans le dernier avènement de Jésus-Christ. ⁴

Je dis... que, les choses supposées comme elles sont, Dieu ayant voulu commencer et achever ses plus grands ouvrages par la très sainte Vierge depuis qu'il l'a formée, il est à croire qu'il ne changera point de conduite dans les siècles des siècles, car il est Dieu et ne change point en ses sentiments ou sa conduite. ⁵

Ce que Marie est devenue par sa maternité divine et sa corédemption, elle le reste donc encore aujourd'hui. Son activité, dans

1. Encyclique *Mystici corporis*.

2. *Contra Gentiles*, IV, cap.55.

3. *Ibid.*, I, cap.83.

4. *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la sainte Vierge*, n.22.

5. *Ibid.*, n.15.

l'Église, est de continuer cette même fonction maternelle qu'inaugurait son « fiat » non seulement pour l'Humanité sainte du Sauveur mais pour tous ses membres.

B) MARIE, MÈRE, MÉDIATRICE ET REINE :

Maternité divine et maternité spirituelle sont inséparables. Celle-ci n'est pas seulement ajoutée à l'autre. Dans le plan concret de la Rédemption, elles se tiennent essentiellement, bien qu'en soi elles soient différentes. Saint Pie X écrit : « An non Christi mater Maria ? Nostra igitur et mater est. »¹ À vrai dire, « Dieu n'a jamais pensé une mère de son Fils qui ne fût pas la nôtre. »² Si une vraie maternité spirituelle est inconcevable sans la maternité divine, la maternité divine, dans l'économie présente doit nécessairement se continuer dans la maternité spirituelle.

Les trois premiers siècles semblent avoir ignoré le titre de mère des hommes. Saint Augustin l'emploie au moins implicitement :

Et mater quidem spiritu, non capitis nostri, quod est ipse Salvator, ex quo magis illa spiritaliter nata est ; sed plane mater membrorum ejus, quod nos sumus ; quia cooperata est caritate, ut fideles in Ecclesia nascerentur, quae illius capitis membra sunt : corpore vero ipsius capitis mater.³

Saint Léon, pape, théologien et docteur, montre le lien vital des membres à la tête. Pour lui, l'Incarnation comporte la génération de tous les chrétiens. Même si le texte ne porte pas sur la maternité

1. Encyclique *Ad diem illum*.

2. TH. KOELER, *Maternité spirituelle de Marie*, dans *Maria*, I, p.592. Il est important de souligner ce point trop souvent méconnu. La maternité spirituelle de Marie est parfois regardée comme purement métaphorique ou simplement comme une espèce de compensation psychologique dans nos rapports avec Dieu, SCHEEBEN notait avec raison : « La maternité universelle et mystique de Marie est souvent expliquée de manière trop superficielle et étroite, trop peu rattachée à la maternité corporelle vis-à-vis du Christ. On se la représente souvent comme semblable à la maternité adoptive ou nourricière qu'une mère humaine peut exercer à côté de sa maternité corporelle. On ramène surtout l'origine de la maternité universelle à la délégation donnée par le Christ sur la Croix et on en voit principalement l'exercice dans l'intercession par laquelle Marie communique la grâce de la rédemption acquise par son fils. » *La mère virginale du Sauveur*, p.113.

3. *De sancta Virginitate*, cap.6, *Oeuvr. compl.*, 21, Vivès, Paris, 1869, p.515. Le P. DOMÍNGUEZ écrit à ce propos : « Inútil sería buscar en los tres primeros siglos del cristianismo la palabra « Madre de los hombres », dicha de María. A lo menos no se puede comprobar el hecho con textos auténticos y expresos. Significa ésto que no le dieron ese nombre tan amable como verdadero ? Quien así creyera demostraría ignorar que muy pocos monumentos de esa época han llegado hasta nosotros, y que los pocos que conocemos, no tocan el modo de invocar a la Virgen. Se trata, pues, de un puro silencio, que no nos autoriza ni para afirmar, ni para negar . . . Los tiempos de San Agustín fueron más favorables a la exposición pública y sin reserva de las doctrinas católicas . . . De aquí resulta ser San Agustín uno de los primeros padres que da a María el nombre de « Madre de los cristianos. » F. DOMÍNGUEZ, *Ideología mariana de san Agustín*, Universidad Católica Javeriana, Bogotá, 1946, pp.215-216.

spirituelle expressément, celle-ci y est implicitement contenue : « Omnia igitur quae Dei Filius ad reconciliationem mundi et fecit, et docuit, non in historia tantum praeteritarum actionum novimus, sed etiam in praesentium operum virtute sentimus. »¹

Ce qui s'est passé dans l'Incarnation se reproduit donc de nos jours : « in praesentium operum virtute ». C'est la même œuvre qui se continue, où concourent les mêmes éléments : « Ipse est (Filius Dei) qui de Spiritu Sancto et matre editus Virgine incontaminatam Ecclesiam suam eadem inspiratione fecundat. »² Ce qui s'est passé autrefois pour le Christ, né de l'opération du Saint-Esprit et de Marie, se vérifie encore dans l'Église que féconde le même Esprit. Plus affirmatif est le passage suivant : « Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis (JOAN., 1, 14). In nobis utique, quod sibi Verbi divinitas cooptavit, cujus caro de utero virginis sumpta nos sumus. »³

C'est presque en termes semblables que saint Pie X montre cette unité mystique qui nous rattache à la fois au Chef et à Celle qui l'a engendré : « Universi ergo, quoque cum Christo jungimur, quique, ut ait Apostolus, membra sumus corporis ejus, de carne ejus et de ossibus ejus, de Mariae utero egressi sumus, tamquam corporis instar cohaerentis cum capite. »⁴

La Maternité qui se poursuit aujourd'hui n'est autre que celle que l'Incarnation a commencée.⁵

1. *Serm. LXIII*, cap.6 ; PL 54, 246.

2. *Ibid.*

3. S. LÉON, *Serm. XXX*, cap.3 ; PL 54, 107. Voir aussi, sur ce sujet, notre travail : *La maternité spirituelle dans les documents pontificaux*, présenté à la Société canadienne d'Études mariales, session de 1956, Sherbrooke.

4. S. PIE X, encyclique *Ad diem illum*.

5. Que l'on rattache la Maternité spirituelle à l'Incarnation ou au Calvaire, nous sommes en face d'une doctrine traditionnelle sanctionnée par la Liturgie et le Magistère. L'Oraison de la fête de Marie Médiatrice dit : « qui beatissimam Virginem matrem tuam, matrem quoque nostram ». À plusieurs reprises, dans la seule encyclique *Fulgens corona*, PIE XII appelle Marie « dulcissima Mater nostra » (au moins trois fois ainsi), ou « suavissimam Matrem nostram », « coelesti Matri nostrae ». Dans l'encyclique *Mystici corporis*, PIE XII rattache Incarnation et Calvaire : « Ita quidem, ut, quae corpore erat nostri Capitis mater, spiritu esset, ob novum doloris gloriaeque titulum, ejus membrorum omnium mater. » En quel sens faut-il interpréter les paroles de Jésus en Croix : « Mulier, ecce filius tuus. Ecce mater tua » ? Les opinions ne sont pas unanimes. De grands Docteurs, SAINT JEAN CHRYSOSTOME, SAINT AUGUSTIN, suivis par SAINT THOMAS, n'ont vu là qu'un acte de piété filiale. Le commentaire d'ORIGÈNE sur ce passage a été fort controversé. Un autre texte, du XII^e siècle, de RUPERT DE DEUTZ, est rejeté par le P. CEUPENS, o.p. : « Diligenter legenti hunc textum Ruperti statim apparet doctrinam a Ruperto propositam circa maternitatem spiritualem Mariae non e textu Joannis, 19, 27 originem ducere, sed semel admissa doctrina de maternitate spirituali Mariae, textus Joannis de Joanne et alio quolibet discipulo « dici potuisset ». » *Mariologia Biblica*, p.200. En dernière instance, on donne la paternité d'une application directe de ce texte à DENIS LE CHARTREUX. LÉON XIII en use en ce sens dans l'encyclique *Adjuvicem populi*. Le P. CEUPENS ne conteste pas que LÉON XIII y déclare la doctrine traditionnelle au sujet de la maternité spirituelle, mais il ne veut voir dans les mots eux-mêmes de ce passage qu'une

Marie n'a jamais cessé d'engendrer ces membres que le Christ, déjà en ce moment, au sein de sa Mère, connaissait et aimait. « Quandoquidem per beatam illam visionem, qua vixdum in Deiparae sinu exceptus fruebatur, omnia mystici Corporis membra continenter perpetuoque sibi praesentia habet, suoque complectitur salutifero amore.¹

Pour rendre de façon plus saisissante ce rôle constant et actuel de Marie, saint Louis-M. de Montfort écrit :

Jésus étant à présent autant que jamais le fruit de Marie... il est certain que Jésus-Christ est pour chaque homme en particulier, qui le possède, aussi véritablement le fruit de l'œuvre de Marie que pour tout le monde en général... et on peut lui appliquer plus véritablement que saint Paul ne se les applique ces paroles : « Quos iterum parturio donec formetur Christus in nobis. » (*Gal.*, 4,19.)²

Cette maternité en acte ne sera pas autre chose que l'exercice même de sa Médiation, dans la phase complémentaire de dispensation de la grâce. Les auteurs sont unanimes sur ce point.³ Le P. Bover l'appelle la phase ultime de la Maternité spirituelle :

La concesión de la gracia divina es la que hace que los hombres vengan a ser real e individualmente miembros vivos del Cuerpo místico de Christo. En esta concesión de la gracia interviene María, no ministerialmente... sino maternalmente, con autoridad materna, como consorte que es de Dios Padre y esposa de Dios Espíritu Santo. Con esta intervención, pues, María influye eficazmente en el renacimiento espiritual y en el progresivo desenvolvimiento de la vida divina en los hombres.⁴

Restreindre la Médiation de Marie à une pure distribution simplement ministérielle et presque mécanique des grâces serait ignorer, à coup sûr, l'ampleur et la profondeur de son rôle. Le rôle de Marie est essentiellement différent de celui des autres saints. Il n'y a pas seule-

application au sens accommodative et non littéral. On peut concéder à l'auteur que la maternité spirituelle de Marie « radices profundiores... habet quam illa libera donatio Christi in cruce. Maria est mater nostra quia cristiani sumus » *loc. cit.*, p. 201, mais, par contre, comme écrit le P. BRAUN : « L'atmosphère dans laquelle baigne le récit de la Crucifixion est une invitation à donner aux paroles de Jésus agonisant une autre densité. Toutes les autres, sans exception, concernent la mission messianique du Sauveur. Il serait surprenant que celles-ci fassent exception. » *La Mère des fidèles*, p.100. En définitive, que le texte contienne cette vérité théologique de la maternité spirituelle d'une façon ou de l'autre, rien n'est changé à la vérité elle-même qui, immédiatement, repose non sur cette parole, mais sur les relations mêmes de Marie avec le Verbe incarné et le Rédempteur, soit sur son rôle de Mère du Chef et de corédemptrice.

1. PIE XII, encyclique *Mystici corporis*

2. *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la sainte Vierge*, n.33.

3. « Maternitas spiritualis adaequate sumpta, i.e. non solum ut est relatio, sed ut est functio maternitatis, importat tum Coredeptionem tum distributionem gratiarum. » A. PLESSIS, *Manuale Mariologiae Dogmaticae*, p.230.

4. *Estudios eclesiásticos*, 23, n.88, Enero-Marzo 1949, p.16.

ment une différence de degré dans un pouvoir d'intercession ; il y a une différence spécifique d'action qui, pour Marie, en conséquence de son rôle maternel, est intrinsèquement liée à la vie surnaturelle des âmes.

Pour marquer la profondeur et l'étendue de cette influence, saint Louis-Marie de Montfort n'a pas reculé devant une image hardie mais parfaitement juste, comparant l'action de Marie à celle du sein maternel où l'enfant reçoit constamment l'influx vital :

Les prédestinés, pour être conformes à l'image du Fils de Dieu, sont en ce monde cachés dans le sein de la très sainte Vierge, où ils sont gardés, nourris, entretenus et agrandis par cette bonne Mère, jusqu'à ce qu'elle les enfante à la gloire, après la mort, qui est proprement le jour de leur naissance, comme l'Église appelle la mort des justes.¹

L'intelligence exacte de ce rôle vital amène logiquement à la conclusion d'une causalité universelle dans le domaine de la grâce. On comprend mal que, si longtemps, certains théologiens aient tardé à reconnaître l'universalité de la Médiation de Marie. Dans la perspective d'une fonction vitale, elle ne peut être qu'universelle. On n'ira pas à se demander si l'influence de la mère atteint aussi bien les jambes que les bras, dans un organisme en formation. La vie anime également toutes les parties. Ainsi, dans l'ordre surnaturel. Le cardinal Gomá y Tomás avait raison d'écrire : « Las mismas funciones de la maternidad con respecto a los hombres exigen esta universal dispensación de todas las gracias por María . . . »²

C'est sur ce rôle maternel aussi bien que sur sa Maternité divine que Pie XII établit la Royauté de Marie. « Beatissimam Virginem esse Reginam non tantummodo quia mater Dei est, verum etiam quod nova veluti Heva cum novo Adam consociata fuit. »²

1. *Traité de la vraie dévotion*, n.33. C'est l'adaptation de ce que SAINT AUGUSTIN dit de l'Église : « Vos suscepit in utero sancta mater Ecclesia, quae sicut et fratres vestros cum summa laetitia spiritaliter pariet, nova proles futura tantae matris, quousque per lavacrum sanctum regeneratos verae luci restituat, congruis alimentis eos, quos portat, pascat in utero, et ad diem partus sui laetos laeta perducatur. » *De symbolo ad Catechum.*, Lib.4, cap.1. — Noct.II, Lect.IV, Sab. in Vigil Pentecostes. Cette œuvre de SAINT AUGUSTIN est aujourd'hui d'une authenticité contestée.

2. *María, Madre y Señora*, p.73. L'auteur se reporte, à la suite, au texte de SAINT THOMAS sur la plénitude de grâce de Marie, dans son commentaire sur l'*Ave María*, que nous avons cité plus haut. C'est également à cette plénitude que le P. LLAMERA, O.P., rattache la Maternité spirituelle, en la rapprochant, comme plusieurs auteurs le font, de la grâce capitale du Christ : « Como la infinita gracia habitual individual derivada de la unión hipostática constituye formalmente la capitalidad de Cristo, así la gracia llena de María motivada por su divina maternidad y procedente de la infinita gracia de Cristo, constituye su maternidad espiritual . . . Es, pues, propiedad esencial de la gracia de Cristo influir la vida a los hombres, miembros suyos . . . Análogamente la Virgen, como Madre, es esencialmente convificadora, pues así lo impone la misma misión maternal y así lo testimonia toda la Tradición al proclamarla Nueva Eva. » M. LLAMERA, O.P., « La

Dans le même sens s'exprime saint Louis-Marie de Montfort : « On doit conclure évidemment », dit-il, comme d'une chose qui ne peut pas être autre :

On doit conclure évidemment... que Marie a reçu de Dieu une grande domination dans les âmes des élus : car elle ne peut pas faire en eux sa résidence, comme Dieu le Père le lui a ordonné ; les former, les nourrir et les enfanter à la vie éternelle comme leur mère, les avoir pour son héritage et sa portion, les former en Jésus-Christ et Jésus-Christ en eux ; jeter dans leur cœur les racines de ses vertus, et être la compagne indissoluble du Saint-Esprit pour tous ses ouvrages de grâce... qu'elle n'ait droit et dénomination dans leurs âmes par une grâce singulière du Très-Haut, qui, lui ayant donné puissance sur son Fils unique et naturel, la lui a aussi donnée sur ses enfants adoptifs, non seulement quant au corps, ce qui serait peu de chose, mais aussi quant à l'âme.¹

Saint Louis-M. de Montfort ne limite pas cette royauté de Marie au domaine intérieur. Elle est bien « reine du ciel et de la terre par grâce » comme le Christ l'est « par nature et par conquête », mais comme le royaume du Christ consiste principalement dans le cœur ou l'intérieur, de même :

le royaume de la très sainte Vierge est principalement dans l'intérieur de l'homme, c'est-à-dire son âme, et c'est principalement dans les âmes qu'elle est plus glorifiée avec son Fils que dans toutes les créatures visibles, et nous pouvons l'appeler avec les saints la reine des cœurs.²

En reliant ainsi Maternité spirituelle et Royauté, saint Louis-Marie de Montfort est pleinement en accord avec l'enseignement de Pie XII. Il est remarquable que c'est surtout cet aspect, le plus profond indiscutablement, que fait ressortir l'encyclique *Ad coeli Reginam*. Si Marie est Reine de l'univers, si elle est la « *potens rerum aevorumque Domina* » en raison de sa Maternité divine, plus profondément encore elle atteint, avec le Christ — dont elle partage « *temperato modo et analogiae ratione* » ce que lui possède « *plena, propria et absoluta significatione* » — l'intime même des volontés humaines.³ « La Royauté de Marie est une réalité supraterrrestre, qui pénètre en même temps, toutefois, jusqu'au plus intime des cœurs et les touche dans leur essence profonde en ce qu'ils ont de spirituel et d'immortel. »⁴

Maternidad y la Asunción de María », *La Ciencia Tomista*, n.255, Enero-Junio, 1950, p.122ss. La même idée se retrouve dans le P. CHAMINADE. Voir TH. STANLEY, S.M., *The mystical body according to the writings of Father Chaminade* ; N. LE MIRE, *La Maternité spirituelle selon Monsieur Chaminade*, dans *La Nouvelle Revue mariale*, 7, 1955, pp.230 ss.

1. *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la sainte Vierge*, n.37.

2. *Ibid.*, n.38.

3. Encyclique *Ad coeli Reginam*.

4. PIE XII, Discours prononcé à la cérémonie mariale du 1^{er} nov. 1954, *Osservatore romano*, édit. française, 5 nov. 1954. « Ce qui démontre la puissance de Marie sur le monde

Nous pouvons légitimement conclure que le rôle instrumental de Marie dans l'œuvre entière du salut la place en un rang inaccessible à tout autre. Alors que les autres saints ne sont que les serviteurs, dans le royaume, elle est, par ses relations avec la Trinité, et le Verbe incarné dont elle partage analogiquement les pouvoirs, la Reine qui siège aux côtés du Roi : « apud ipsum sedet Regina ».¹

III. MARIE EST CAUSE INSTRUMENTALE PHYSIQUE DE LA GRÂCE

La seule réponse qui nous paraisse adéquatement satisfaisante pour expliquer le rôle de Marie dans l'œuvre de la sanctification des âmes, c'est celle d'une causalité instrumentale physique par laquelle analogiquement à l'Humanité sainte du Christ, Marie exerce pleinement ce que requiert sa Médiation maternelle et sa Royauté.

Ayant déjà indiqué, dans la première partie de ce travail, en quoi consiste cette causalité, de même que les opinions contraires ou favorables, nous procédons immédiatement à la preuve de notre conclusion.

Deux difficultés sont apportées par ceux qui refusent à Marie une causalité instrumentale physique dans la production de la grâce, à savoir qu'aucun agent créé ne peut en être cause, même comme instrument ; ou, pour d'autres qui en admettent la possibilité, que rien n'en prouve le fait.

À la première difficulté, nous avons déjà répondu que la créature peut être cause instrumentale efficiente de la grâce. Tel est le cas de l'Humanité sainte, des sacrements et des ministres.

Reste la deuxième difficulté, à savoir si, en fait, il en est ainsi de la sainte Vierge. Comme tout ce qui touche le mystère de Marie dans l'œuvre du salut est pure grâce de la part de Dieu, seule la Révélation peut nous apporter une réponse. Ainsi raisonne saint Thomas quand il se demande si Dieu se serait incarné dans le cas où l'homme n'aurait pas péché : « Ea enim quae ex sola Dei voluntate proveniunt supra omne debitum creaturae, nobis innotescere non possunt, nisi quatenus in Sacra Scriptura traduntur, per quam divina voluntate nobis innotescit. »²

et les éléments, son droit de propriété sur l'univers racheté par Elle avec son Fils, ne prouve pas, de soi, qu'Elle ait une domination sur la direction intime du cœur. Il faut une autre source de raisons. On la trouve dans la nature de sa Médiation universelle de toutes les grâces de la Rédemption et de sa Maternité spirituelle qui est sa Médiation spéciale par rapport au genre humain. » V. DEVY, S.M.M., *La Royauté universelle de Marie*, dans *Nouvelle Revue mariale*, 8, 1956, pp.29-30.

1. LÉON XIII, encyclique *Jucunda semper*.

2. *IIIa*, q.1, a.3, c.

Il y a donc lieu de voir d'abord si la sainte Écriture apporte quelque lumière à ce sujet. De plus, la question peut se poser quant à la vie terrestre de Marie et quant à son existence présente au ciel.

1) *Autorité de la sainte Écriture*

Nous lisons dans saint Luc, au sujet de la Visitation : « Et intravit in domum Zachariae et salutavit Elisabeth. Et factum est, ut audivit salutationem Mariae Elisabeth, exultavit infans in utero ejus, et repleta est Spiritu Sancto Elisabeth. » ¹

Léon XIII reconnaît là une grâce extraordinaire et en attribue l'effet à la salutation de Marie : « Tum Joannes in materno utero sanctificatur charismate insigni . . . Haec tamen contingunt ex salutatione Mariae. » ²

La Tradition patristique est unanime en ce sens. Origène, traduit par saint Jérôme, montre que la sanctification de Jean-Baptiste tient à la salutation même de Marie puisque le Christ, désireux de donner la grâce à son Précurseur, attend jusque-là pour la lui infuser :

Jesus vero qui in utero illius erat, festinabat adhuc in ventre matris Joannem positum sanctificare. Denique antequam veniret Maria et salutaret Elisabeth, non exultavit infans in utero ; sed statim ut Maria locuta est verbum, quod Filius Dei in ventre matris suggererat, exultavit infans in gaudio, et tunc primum praecursorem suum prophetam fecit Jesus.³

Quatre choses sont à noter dans ce texte :

a) la sanctification de Jean-Baptiste est attribuée au Christ lui-même : « Jesus festinabat Joannem sanctificare. »

b) il était aussi facile au Christ de sanctifier son Précurseur à distance que dans la maison d'Élisabeth : « Antequam veniret Maria . . . non exultavit infans. » Un lien physique entre la présence de Marie et la sanctification de Jean-Baptiste est nettement indiqué.

c) plus forte encore est l'affirmation suivante : « statim ut Maria locuta est verbum, quod Filius Dei suggererat ». Il ne s'agit pas seulement d'un effet produit à l'occasion d'une parole, mais bien d'un effet de sanctification causé par le Christ, comme cause instrumentale principale, par son Humanité sainte, au moyen de Marie, comme cause instrumentale physique.

d) l'effet : « exultavit infans ».

Origène se demande ensuite pourquoi Marie est-elle restée trois mois chez Élisabeth :

Si enim eo quod tantum venit Maria ad Elisabeth, et salutavit eam, exultavit infans in gaudio, et Spiritu Sancto plena Elisabeth prophetavit

1. LUC, 1, 41-44.

2. Encyclique *Jucunda semper*.

3. *Hom. I in Luc.*, in S. JÉRÔME, *Œuvr. compl.*, 10, trad. Bareille, Vivès, Paris, 1884, p.130.

ea quae in Evangelio scripta sunt, et in una hora tantos profectus habuit, nostrae conjecturae relinquitur, quid in tribus mensibus Joannes profecit, assistente Maria Elisabeth.¹

Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie commente ainsi le même passage :

Interna Dei energia et vi, prophetiae donum obtinere alicui potest ; secus nequaquam. Cum igitur salutatio sacrae Virginis Mariae Jesum per id temporis in utero adhuc gestantis, Joannem maternis visceribus adhuc inclusum ad prophetiam promoverit, quomodo Christum non est Deus, qui intra virginem claustra etiamnum latitans divina vi ad prophetiam gratiam Baptistam evexit.²

Saint Cyrille veut prouver la divinité du Christ. Seules, dit-il, la force et la vertu divines : « energia et vi », — les mots les plus forts, — peuvent produire un tel effet. Or la salutation de Marie portant le Christ a produit un tel effet. Donc le Christ est Dieu. Saint Cyrille se trouve à prouver en même temps que Marie a concouru physiquement à cet effet de grâce.

Ailleurs, saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie salue Marie : « di'ën Joannes . . . exiliit. »³ Or cette préposition *dia* avec l'accusatif indique un mouvement *à travers*. Il y eut donc une influence qui passa à travers cette cause instrumentale qu'est Marie. Or cet influx est précisément celui de la cause principale qui, dans le cas, est le Verbe Incarné au sein de Marie.

Saint Ambroise attribue cet effet de grâce à la simple présence de Marie, et non seulement à sa parole :

Ad vocem Mariae exultavit infantulus. Nec immerito mansit integer corpore, quem tribus mensibus oleo quodam suae praesentiae et integritatis unguento Domini mater exercuit.⁴

Praesentia enim Verbi hausit anima virtutem. Sicut praesentia Mariae, cum utero gravis esset, erudit Joannem in utero constitutum.⁵

Comme Origène, saint Ambroise attribue à la présence prolongée de Marie des effets de sanctification. Dans le même sens, saint Albert le Grand commente longuement ce passage.

Des théologiens ont interprété la parole de Marie comme l'exercice d'une causalité physique. De Vega dit ainsi : « Plures aiunt B. Virginis salutantis Elisabetham verba fuisse instrumentum physicum gratiae collatae Joanni . . . »⁶

1. ORIGÈNE, in S. JÉRÔME, *Œuvr. compl., loc. cit.*, p.136.

2. *De recta fide ad Reginas 1* ; PG 76, 88c, col.1275.

3. *Hom. XI*, PG 77, col.1033-1034.

4. *De institutione virginis* ; PL 16, col.319.

5. S. AMBROISE, *De Isaac et anima* ; PL 14, n.373, col.521.

6. C. DE VEGA, *Theologia mariana*, II, Neapoli, 1866, p.283, n.1544. On pourrait ajouter à ce « plures aiunt », le CARD. LÉPICIER, qui écrivait : « Negari non potest Matrem

Il cite entre autres le cardinal Tolet, qui y voit aussi un « instrumentum ». De même que les paroles de certains hommes dont Dieu se sert pour opérer des miracles sont « significativa, et efficacia », « ita etiam verbum salutationis Virginis significativum fuit, et effectivum. »¹

Le 24 mai 1933, l'université de Milan s'exprimait comme suit dans un Vœu présenté à Pie XI, pour obtenir la définition de la Médiation de Marie : « Constat enim in opere sanctificationis, Christum etiam tum in Mariae sinu latentem, Baptistam suum, ejusque matrem Elisabeth per Mariae salutationem, quasi per quoddam sacramentum, sanctificasse. »²

La Sacrée Pénitencerie a renouvelée, le 8 juin 1935, une indulgence à la prière suivante : « Jesu Infans dulcissime, per Virginem Matrem tuam visitans Elisabeth, Joannem Baptistam Praecursorem tuum Spiritu Sancto replens, et adhuc in utero matris suae sanctificans, miserere nostri. »³

Il y a donc unanimité chez les Pères et les Docteurs pour reconnaître dans ce texte une action instrumentale de Marie sous l'influence du Christ qu'elle porte. Unanimité également à souligner la durée de cette influence, tout le temps de son séjour chez Élisabeth, et le progrès de la mère et de l'enfant. Or même si l'on disait que ce n'est là qu'une causalité morale par rapport à Élisabeth, par l'exemple et les paroles d'édification, on ne peut certainement pas l'affirmer de Jean-Baptiste qui n'avait aucun moyen de communication avec l'extérieur. Il fallait donc que cette influence fût d'ordre physique.

Si l'on objecte que cet effet n'est produit que par Jésus au sein de Marie, sans l'entremise de celle-ci, c'est contredire le texte sacré, dont le cardinal Lépicier disait : « expresse », « evidenti Scripturarum testimonio ». Les Commentateurs autorisés sont du même avis. Knabenbauer écrit : « Voce B. Virginis, quasi vehiculo quodam Verbum Incarnatum et Praecursori suo et ejus matri beneficia confert : primos suos favores et gratias interventu Mariae distribui vult. »⁴

Dei, adhuc in terris degentem . . . physicum gratiae divinitus conferendae instrumentum extitisse, cum id factum fuisse expresse legamus in sanctificatione Joannis Baptistae . . . « Nihil obstat, ajoute-t-il, quominus id quod evidenti Scripturarum testimonio dicimus circa sanctificationem Joannis in utero, ad alia facta referamus, quatenus videlicet Deipara Virgo dicenda sit physice cooperata, sub Christo Domino, sive ad gratiam conferendam ut putes in pastorem et magorum illuminatione et sanctificatione. » *Tractatus de B. Virgine Maria*, 4a edit., p.525.

1. C. DE VEGA, *loc. cit.*

2. *Catholica Studiorum Universitas a Sacratissimo Corde Jesu hoc votum Sanctitati Pii Papae XI feliciter regnantis defert ad definitionem dogmaticam promovendam de B. Maria V. omnium gratiarum Mediatrix*, p.10.

3. *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum*, Typis Vaticanis, 1950, n.126, p.64.

4. *Comment.*, in hoc loco, cité ap. E. CAMPANA, *Marie dans le dogme cath.*, I, p.297.

On peut ajouter également que nulle part mieux qu'ici se vérifie la condition de la cause instrumentale qui est élevée par la vertu de la cause principale et sert de *medium* à l'effet précontenu en celle-ci et qui n'a, dans l'instrument, qu'un *esse transiens*. Instrument privilégié, Marie contient physiquement en son sein la cause elle-même.

2) *Autorité du Magistère*

La Médiation de Marie n'est pas encore de foi. Elle semble prête cependant pour une définition, quand il plaira au Magistère suprême d'y procéder. Sous une forme ou l'autre, les papes ont rappelé cette Médiation de Marie et invité à y recourir. On objectera peut-être qu'il est fait mention, dans ces cas, de la prière de Marie et non de son action. Il reste à savoir si la doctrine de la Médiation physique a l'approbation du Magistère. De façon négative, on peut affirmer que jamais rien n'est venu réprouver cette opinion. De façon positive, c'est, croyons-nous, dans le sens d'une Médiation physique que nous pouvons entendre certains passages auxquels nous nous arrêterons :

Dans son encyclique *Octobri mense*, Léon XIII écrit :

Divina consilia addecet magna cum religione intueri. Filius Dei aeternus, quum, ad hominis redemptionem et decus, hominis naturam vellet suscipere, eaque re mysticum quoddam cum universo humano genere initurus esset connubium, non id ante perfecit quam liberrime consensus accessisset designatae Matris, quae ipsius generis humani personam quodammodo agebat, ad eam illustram verissimamque Aquinatis sententiam : Per annuntiationem expectabatur consensus Virginis, loco totius humanae naturae. Ex quo, non minus vere proprieque affirmare licet prorsus de permagno illo omnis gratiae thesauro, quem attulit Dominus, siquidem gratia et veritas per Jesus Christum facta est, nihil nobis, nisi per Mariam, Deo sic volente, impertiri.¹

Or nous pouvons dire ce qui suit :

a) le texte commence par un avertissement solennel, comme pour préparer les esprits à un ordre de choses hors de l'ordinaire : « divina consilia addecet magna cum religione intueri. » On ne verrait pas la raison d'un tel début s'il s'agissait simplement d'intercession sans plus, comme pour n'importe quel autre saint.

b) le pape montre bien qu'il ne s'agit pas ici d'*a priori*. Tout ce que Marie possède de privilèges, c'est par pure libéralité divine qu'elle le possède. Le pape nous met en face d'un ordre établi par Dieu seul : « divina consilia, sic Deo volente. »

c) le pape rapproche le rôle de Marie dans l'acquisition des grâces, par son libre consentement, de celui qu'elle a dans leur distribution. Or de ce dernier : « non minus vere proprieque affirmare licet. »

1. Encyclique *Octobri mense*, 22 sept. 1891, dans *Lettres apostoliques*, 3, pp.96-98.

d) Nulle part, dans ce texte, il n'est question d'intercession, mais uniquement de transmission de la grâce : « nihil nobis, per Mariam impertiri. » Étant donnée la possibilité pour Dieu d'opérer par le moyen d'une causalité instrumentale physique, on ne voit pas pourquoi Celle qui, dans l'acquisition de la grâce, a joué un rôle tellement au-dessus de tout ce que peut atteindre une pure créature ne serait pas capable, toujours sous l'influx de la même causalité principale qu'est Dieu, d'accéder à quelque chose de moindre sur le plan de l'efficacité. L'Incarnation, en effet, est plus grande que la simple transfusion de la grâce, si grande soit-elle.

Un autre texte de Léon XIII est le suivant :

Non alia nimirum nisi hac de qua dicimus conciliationis et deprecationis lege, a sancto Bernardino Senensi in hanc sententiam expressa : omnis gratia quae huic saeculo communicatur, triplicem habet processum. Nam a Deo in Christum, a Christo in Virginem, a Virgine in nos ordinatissime dispensatur. Quibus veluti gradibus, diversae quidem inter se rationis, positae, in hoc extremo libentius quodammodo longiusque ex instituto Rosarii insistimus.¹

a) il s'agit bien ici de la grâce : « omnis gratia ».

b) le pape indique trois degrés par lesquels la grâce est communiquée « ordinatissime ». Nous avons déjà signalé cet « ordo rerum ». L'ordre des choses exige qu'il y ait une gradation dans les êtres. Dans le cas présent, Dieu est cause principale de la grâce : le Christ, instrument conjoint dans sa nature humaine : Marie, instrument séparé privilégié.

c) La particule *in* unit tous les membres : « a Deo in Christum, a Christo in Virginem, a Virgine in nos. » Or la grâce est une entité physique. C'est physiquement qu'elle nous est communiquée. C'est physiquement qu'elle est produite par Dieu et l'Humanité sainte. D'où viendrait alors que, en Marie, cette causalité cessât d'être physique, alors que, dans le texte, sont associés Dieu, le Christ et Marie ?

J. Rivière, parlant de ce texte, en reprochant aux PP. de la Broise et Bainvel de brouiller causalité morale et causalité physique, écrit : « Texte où il s'agit uniquement d'une causalité physique, et que la glose de l'auteur [De la Broise-Bainvel] transpose inconsciemment dans l'ordre moral : « Dieu exauce le Christ, le Christ exauce Marie, et Marie . . . exauce nos prières. »²

1. Encyclique *Jucunda semper*, dans *Lettres apostoliques*, 4, p.36.

2. J. RIVIÈRE, *La Notion de Marie-Médiatrice*, dans *Ephemerides Theol. Lovan.*, 1925, p.227. J. RIVIÈRE y analyse l'ouvrage des PP. DE LA BROISE et BAINVEL, *Marie, mère de grâce*.

Maints textes de Pie XII semblent pareillement indiquer plus que la simple intercession. Dans une prière à Marie, le 13 novembre 1949, il s'exprime comme suit :

Mère du Divin Amour, conservez à nous qui sommes vos Fils, le feu de cet amour divin. Avivez-le dans les cœurs fervents. Ravivez-le dans les cœurs tièdes. Rallumez-le dans les cœurs indifférents qui l'ont laissé s'éteindre. Régénérez à la vie de cet Amour, les pauvres âmes qui l'ont perdue par le péché.¹

Si le début peut s'entendre d'une simple causalité morale, la fin de cette prière indique plutôt une efficence.

a) Il s'agit de rendre aux âmes la grâce perdue ; b) le terme régénérer dans l'usage qui lui est consacré, à propos de la grâce, indique quelque chose dans l'ordre de l'efficence.

Dans son Radiomessage à l'Action catholique italienne, Pie XII compare Marie au soleil et à son action efficace :

Tu sei, o Maria . . . eletta come il sole. La luce del sole ha una differenza grande da quella della luna ; è luce che acalda e che vivifica . . . La luce della luna non porta il calore, non porta la vita. Fonte di luce, di calore e di vita è il sole. . . Sotto l'influsso dell'aiuto di questo sole che è Maria fruttificano i buoni pensieri nelle anime.²

Mais le texte le plus obvie est celui de l'encyclique *Ad coeli Reginam*.

Praeterea Beata Virgo non solummodo supremum, post Christum, excellentiae ac perfectionis gradum obtinuit, verum etiam aliquam illius efficacitatis participationem, qua eius Filius ac Redemptor noster in mentes et in voluntates hominum regnare jure meritoque dicitur. Si enim Verbum per Humanitatem assumptam miracula patrat et gratiam infundit, si Sacramentis, si Sanctis suis tanquam instrumentis utitur ad animorum salutem, cur matris suae sanctissimae munere et opere non utatur ad Redemptionis fructus nobis impertiendos ?³

C'est dans le sens d'une causalité instrumentale physique que ce passage a été interprété par plusieurs théologiens. Le P. Isidro Cleves commente ainsi :

Claro es que la naturaleza de la gracia y la absoluta dependencia que todo esencialmente tiene de Dios, no nos permite atribuir a la Virgen una acción plenamente autónoma . . . Por qué Dios no le pudo encomendar la distribución de las gracias si « el Verbo obra milagros e infunde la gracia

1. Texte italien dans *Osservatore romano*, 14-15 nov. 1949. Cité apud R. KOTHEN, *Docum. Pontif. de S. S. Pie XII*, Labergerie, Paris, 1949, p.478.

2. *Osservatore romano*, 9-10 déc. 1955. AAS., 28-30 déc. 1955.

3. Encyclique *Ad coeli Reginam*.

por medio de la Humanidad que tomó, si se sirve de los sacramentos y de los santos para la salvación de las almas ? ¹

Dans une étude sur la *Mariologie de saint Paul de la Croix*, le P. Basilio de San Pablo, c.p., rappelle, à propos de l'action sanctificatrice de Marie dans les âmes, les opinions touchant la Médiation soit morale ou physique. Or, faisant allusion à la causalité instrumentale physique, il écrit :

Parece favorecer a esta segunda forma de causalidad el actual Pontífice cuando escribe en la *Ad Coeli Reginam* : « La Bienaventurada Virgen Maria ha recibido una participación de aquel influjo con que su Hijo y Redentor dicese con justicia que reina en la mente y en la voluntad de los hombres. » ²

Citant alors le passage où Pie XII parle de l'influence de Marie au plus intime des cœurs, le même auteur commente : « Tocar « en la profunda esencia de los corazones » no se aviene muy bien que digamos con un influjo indirecto o moral ; reclamando más bien el influjo físico o directo. » ³

De même le P. Roschini affirme : « Sembra qui affermata in modo chiaro la strumentalità fisica di Maria SS. nella distribuzione di tutte le grazie, oltre alla causalità morale, per via di intercessione. » ³

Le texte de Pie XII, à notre avis, comprend trois parties : 1) l'affirmation d'une conclusion ; 2) la preuve ; 3) la confirmation par d'autres témoignages du Magistère que nous donnerons à la suite.

1) *la thèse* : Marie n'occupe pas seulement, après le Christ, le plus haut degré d'excellence et de perfection, elle participe vraiment à l'efficacité de son action dans les esprits et les volontés des hommes. « Beata Virgo non solummodo supremum, post Christum, excellentiae ac perfectionis gradum obtinuit, verum etiam aliquam illius efficacitatis participationem . . . in mentes et in voluntates . . . »

Deux raisons pour justifier cette participation : a) sa qualité de Mère de Dieu : « qua ejus Filius », et celle de corédemptrice et d'associée : « ac Redemptor noster. » Les deux membres sont très étroitement unis : « ejus Filius ac Redemptor noster ». Il n'est son Fils « que pour être notre Rédempteur ». C'est toute la finalité de sa Maternité qui est affirmée en même temps. Enfin, les sujets de cette efficience sont les esprits et les volontés des hommes : « in mentes et in voluntates hominum. » Or saint Thomas nous enseigne : « Voluntatem . . . immutare solius Dei est. » C'est là l'action de la grâce seule. Si Marie participe à cette efficacité « in mentes et voluntates », et cela

1. *La Encíclica de la Realeza de María*, dans *Virtud y Letras*, 1955, n.53, p.24.

2. BASILIO DE SAN PABLO, C.P., *La Mariologia de San Pablo de la Cruz*, dans *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, vol.VIII (1958) n.1, pp.131-132.

3. *Marianum*, 1954, p.430.

« post Christum », c'est donc physiquement, à titre de cause instrumentale. Le Christ seul est Roi des intelligences et des cœurs ; Marie l'est par participation.

En résumé, cette thèse contient quatre affirmations :

- a) Marie n'occupe pas seulement un rang d'excellence et de perfection ;
- b) Marie participe vraiment à l'action efficace de son Fils ;¹
- c) Marie y participe à titre de mère et d'associée dans la Rédemption ;
- d) Marie exerce cette efficence dans les esprits et les volontés.

2) L'argumentation :

Si enim Verbum per Humanitatem assumptam miracula patrat et gratiam infundit, si Sacramentis, si Sanctis suis tamquam instrumentis utitur ad animarum salutem, cur Matris suae Sanctissimae munere et opere non utatur . . .

L'argument procède *a simili*, sous une forme conditionnelle ; ce qui revient, dans sa forme positive, aux énoncés suivants :

« Verbum utitur tamquam instrumentis Humanitate assumpta
Sacramentis
Sanctis

Sic uti potest tamquam instrumento munere et opere Matris suae. »

C'est là l'idée qui ressort normalement de ces rapprochements. Marie est mise au rang des instruments du salut. L'Humanité sainte, les sacrements sont les cas classiques d'instrumentalité, en théologie. Or, en tous ces cas, il s'agit d'instrumentalité physique. À prendre les termes objectivement, il semblerait illogique de se servir de ces exemples pour conclure à une simple causalité morale du rôle de Marie. De plus, comme cette causalité morale est reconnue depuis longtemps et hors de discussion, le long préambule qui précède, tellement nuancé, serait inutile et hors de propos. Il faut conclure que l'idée de Pie XII semble bien d'assimiler le rôle de Marie, toutes proportions gardées, à une causalité instrumentale physique. Nous disons : toutes proportions gardées, car le Souverain Pontife ne met pas sur le même plan tous les instruments dont il fait mention. Comparer n'est pas équiper. L'Humanité sainte, les sacrements, les saints n'opèrent pas tous de même façon, même s'ils se rejoignent en ceci qu'ils exercent, selon le mode propre à chacun, une causalité instrumentale.

1. Efficence et efficacité sont dans l'ordre de l'exécution pratique et réelle. « Efficienter, effective, elicitive ad aliquid concurrere dicitur de illo, quod immediate exequitur et efficit opus. » J. Z. MELLINIO, *S. Thomas Aquinatis Summa Theologica, Indices et Lexicon*, VI, Marietti, Taurini, 1937.

Il faut prendre en leur rigueur les mots « munere » et « opere » employés par le pape.¹ Ils se rapportent à l'efficiencia, dans leur sens original.

3) Confirmation :

Pie XII apporte des textes de Pie IX, de Léon XIII et de saint Pie X. Deux choses en ressortent : la puissance « paene immensam » dont jouit Marie, et la raison d'une telle puissance, ses droits maternels : « Maternum in nos gerens animum. »² « Mariam hoc munus obire veluti materno jure. »³

On peut objecter : ces textes ne parlent pas de causalité instrumentale physique, mais plutôt de causalité morale.

On peut répondre : a) si ces textes eussent été le contraire de ce qu'il affirme, Pie XII ne les aurait pas employés en confirmation de ce qu'il enseigne ; b) comme Pie XII apporte une précision que les documents antérieurs n'avaient pas encore donnée, mais qu'ils contenaient implicitement, il n'y a pas lieu de se surprendre que les textes de ses prédécesseurs ne soient pas aussi clairs ; c) c'est par la doctrine générale des papes auxquels elles réfèrent qu'il faut comprendre ces mêmes affirmations.

Nous avons vu, précédemment, plusieurs de ces textes. Nous pourrions ajouter celui-ci de saint Pie X, utilisant la comparaison de saint Bernard : « Collum per quod corpus cum capite jungitur itemque caput in corpus vim et virtutem exerit. »⁴

Le cou a une double fonction : l'une, organique, joindre la tête au corps ; l'autre vitale : transmettre l'influx de la tête au corps. Le cou lui-même n'a pas cette efficacité, mais à travers lui la tête agit physiquement dans le reste du corps. Le texte est d'autant plus fort que le saint Pontife ajoute immédiatement comme une mise en garde contre une interprétation excessive de sa pensée : « Patet itaque abesse profecto plurimum in nos Deiparae supernaturalis gratiae efficiendae vim tribuamus quae Dei unius est. »⁵

Puisque le saint Pontife prend la peine de dire que Marie ne produit pas la grâce, qui ne peut être attribuée qu'à Dieu seul, c'est donc : a) qu'il s'agit bien ici de l'efficiencia même de la grâce ; b) que Marie ne peut en être cause principale. Or, en ne disant rien de plus,

1. « Neque audiendi sunt qui aiunt : « Non fuit Pontificis intentio hoc vel illud dicere. » Pontificum intentio ex eorum verbis, sensu obvio et naturali intellectis, colligenda est. » J. B. CAROL, O.F.M., *Romanorum doctrina de B. V. Coredemptrice*, dans *Marianum*, 9, 1947, p.182.

2. PIE IX, constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*.

3. S. PIE X, encyclique *Ad diem illum*.

4. *Ibid.*

5. S. PIE X, encyclique *Ad diem illum*, dans *Actes*, I, pp.79-80.

alors qu'il eût été facile d'écarter tout mode d'efficience, le pape laisse la possibilité d'une causalité instrumentale physique pour Marie.

3) *Autorité de la Tradition patristique et ecclésiastique*

À première vue, les témoignages tout à fait probants de la Tradition peuvent sembler rares. Il faut remarquer : a) que dans un grand nombre de passages, il est difficile de discerner la métaphore et la doctrine qu'elle enveloppe ; b) bien des textes considérés isolément ne livrent pas tout ce qu'ils contiennent. Là-dessus, il faut tenir compte du Magistère, de la vie et de l'usage de l'Église.

Parfois, en effet, les documents isolés de l'antiquité, vus seulement en eux-mêmes, apportent peu de lumière, mais ils deviennent de splendides témoignages de la Vérité chrétienne s'ils sont confrontés avec la Vie liturgique de l'Église, avec la foi, la dévotion et la piété du peuple chrétien, que le Magistère soutient et dirige.¹

Le silence apparent de certains textes n'est donc pas une négation. Il faudrait pour cela prouver que ces textes ne contiennent pas du tout cette causalité instrumentale, même s'ils n'en parlent pas explicitement. Plusieurs, au contraire, n'ont d'explication satisfaisante qu'en ce sens. C'est de la même façon, d'ailleurs, que les théologiens ont procédé pour en conclure à la causalité instrumentale des sacrements.

Ainsi, dans le texte suivant, saint Germain de Constantinople parle de l'action de Marie au ciel, nonobstant son éloignement local :

Etenim qua ratione cum antiquioris aetatis hominibus in carne conversabaris, ea quoque nobiscum spiritu habitas ; . . . nihil enim illa, animam inter ac corpus divisio, tuam ac servorum tuorum dignationem prohibere possit. Haud quippe dimisisti, quibus fuisti saluti ; haud abs te congregatos dereliquisti, nam spiritus tuus vivit, nec caro corruptionem sepulcri sustinuit. Omnes visitas, tuaque, Dei mater, inspectio in omnes existit . . . Nihil enim caro, tui spiritus virtuti ac efficacia officit.²

Un autre passage du même saint met sur les lèvres de Marie les mots suivants : « Altissimum adoro . . . cui per humilitatem meam complacuit, naturam invidia perditam uberrima gratia dignam efficere ; meque salutis, immo et deificationis, mundo conciliandae Mediatrix constituere. »³

Dans le même sens d'une causalité instrumentale physique, il faudrait souvent entendre certaines expressions, très fréquentes chez

1. PIE XII, Radiomessage au Congrès mariologique de Rome, dans *Osservatore romano*, 5 nov. 1954.

2. *In Dormit. B. Mariae* I ; PG 90, 343-346.

3. PG 140, 730.

les écrivains ecclésiastiques ou les textes liturgiques : *Vitae datrix*,¹ *Mater gratiae*.

Au nom de *Mediatrix*, les documents anciens ajoutent parfois celui de *operatrix*, bien que cette activité soit toujours présentée comme subordonnée à celle de Dieu.²

C'est bien en ce sens qu'un auteur spirituel plus près de nous, saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, pour décrire le rôle intime de Marie dans les âmes, emploie l'expression suivante et autres semblables : « l'opération de Marie »,³ « ouvrière des grandes merveilles, particulièrement à l'intérieur », où elle « travaille en secret ». ⁴ Quand elle a jeté ses racines dans une âme, elle y « produit des merveilles de grâce qu'elle seule peut produire. » ⁵ Il n'y a qu'elle qui peut « produire en union avec le Saint-Esprit, les choses singulières et extraordinaires ». ⁶ Les auteurs ont ordinairement compris ces expressions dans le sens d'une causalité physique.

Parlant des Apôtres des derniers temps, le même saint écrit : « Voilà de grands hommes qui viendront, mais que Marie fera par ordre du Très-Haut. » ⁷

De façon très voisine de la précédente, Léon XIII dit de Marie que : « Ipsa movente, roborante, viri extiterunt sanctitate clari. » ⁸

Sans en faire un titre particulier, nous pourrions ajouter, à la suite de ces documents anciens soit liturgiques, soit d'écrivains ecclésiastiques, deux oraisons liturgiques où il semble bien indiqué une action de Marie dans l'ordre de la causalité instrumentale physique ; difficilement, du moins, pourrions-nous les entendre d'une pure causa-

1. Missel de Cantorbery, XIV^e s. DREVE-BLUME, *Analecta Hymnica*, XL, n.102, p.103. Le P. DE IRAGUI, qui en a fait une étude spéciale, note : « Resulta difícil establecer con seguridad la significación precisa de fórmulas, tan de continuo aplicadas a María, como éstas : *mater gratiae*, *mater omnis gratiae* . . . A veces el contexto permitirá determinar con probabilidad su sentido, pero considerado el caso en sí mismo, como a los himnos no se puede venir a buscar una lógica cerrada, siempre quedará posible otro sentido, o al menos, no será único el sentido posible. » *La Mediación de la Virgen en la Himnografía Latina de la Edad Media*, pp.254-255.

2. HAIMON raconte « quid in ipso sabbato circa quamdam famulam suam misericordiae mater operari dignata sit » alors que « in conspectu astantium . . . de lecto surrexit. » Lettre sur la construction de l'église de Saint-Pierre-sur-Dive, en 1145. Bibl. de l'École des Chartes, XXI, 1859, n.IX, p.129. On attribue à Marie d'autres faits : « operatrice magnalium operante ». EDMOND ALBE, *Les miracles de N. D. de Roc-Amadour au XII^e s.*, p.276. « The divine power uses her as an instrument or agent. » SISTER M. VINCENTINE GRIPKEY, *The Blessed Virgin Mary as Mediatrix in the Latin and Old French Legend prior to the Fourteenth Century*, Washington, D. C., 1938, p.701.

3. *Le Secret de Marie*, n.50.

4. *Ibid.*, n.55.

5. *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la sainte Vierge*, n.35.

6. *Ibid.*, n.35.

7. *Ibid.*, n.59.

8. Encyclique *Adjutricem populi*, dans *Lettres Apostoliques*, 4, p.140.

lité morale : « Omnipotens sempiterna Deus, qui curam de omnibus in Te confidentibus semper habes, quaesumus ; ut per oblationem, quam tibi offerimus. *Visitationem spiritualem* beatae Mariae Virginis in nostris necessitatibus sentiamus. »¹ Et cette autre : « Quos coelesti, Domine, alimento satiasti, *sublevet dextera genetricis tuae immaculatae* : ut ad aeternam patriam, ipsa adjuvante, pervenire mereamur. »²

Là où il est parlé de « dextera Domini », dans la sainte Écriture, il s'agit de la force divine elle-même. C'est la *virtus*. « Dextera Domini fecit virtutem. »³ « Dextera Domini fortiter egit. »⁴ C'est donc la force de Dieu appliquée à son bras. En employant la même expression, de Marie, il semble s'agir non pas de simple intercession, mais de cette force divine elle-même dont Marie est l'instrument physique.

4) Preuves de raison

A) MARIE, ASSOCIÉE DU CHRIST :

De toute éternité, le Christ et Marie ont été associés, dans la volonté de Dieu, pour la réalisation d'une œuvre commune, celle du salut. Or si Marie n'était pas associée au Christ dans la production même de la grâce, il y aurait comme une rupture dans l'intégrité même de cette association. Il y a donc une souveraine convenance à ce que Marie soit associée au Christ jusqu'à la production même de la grâce dans les âmes.

La majeure ressort de nombreux textes qui ont prouvé antérieurement cette association de la Mère et du Fils. En particulier des documents du Magistère qui enseignent que « ab initio et ante saecula unigenito Filio suo Matrem . . . elegit et ordinavit. »⁵ et durant toute sa vie, Marie fut « perpetua cum Jesu filio, ad gaudia, ad lacrimas, communione vitae instituta. »⁶ Une Tradition ininterrompue, depuis les premiers siècles de l'Église, rappelle cette association de Marie à Jésus : « consors sui operis. »⁷

À la mineure, on peut dire que l'association du Christ ou de Marie ne peut être rompue que du côté de Dieu ou du côté de Marie. Or Dieu est immuable. Il ne reste donc possibilité d'une rupture que du

1. *Missel cistercien*, Secrète de la fête de la Visitation.

2. *Missel Romain*, Postcommunion des Apparitions de Lourdes, 11 fév.

3. Ps. 116 (117), 16.

4. *Ibid.*, nouvelle traduction.

5. PIE IX, constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*.

6. LÉON XIII, encyclique *Magnae Dei Matris*, 7 sept. 1892, dans *Lettres apostoliques*, 3, p.150.

7. S. ALBERT LE GRAND, *Mariale*, q.43. Le P. FRIES, C.S.S.R., a dénoncé le caractère apocryphe du *Mariale*, dans une étude intitulée : *Die unter dem Namen des Albertus Magnus überlieferten Mariologischen Schriften*, Aschendorf, Münster.

côté de Marie. Or ici il est tout à fait inconcevable qu'une infidélité quelconque ait légitimé son rejet d'une œuvre où elle avait été jusque là le parfait instrument de Dieu.

B) MARIE, CORÉDEMPTRICE :

La Rédemption est l'acte par lequel le Christ, par son sacrifice, a satisfait à Dieu, mérité le salut et racheté l'homme tombé en le rétablissant dans l'ordre surnaturel dont il était déchu.¹ Or la Corédemption est la coopération active de Marie à la Rédemption. Donc par sa corédemption, Marie a coopéré au sacrifice du Christ et à ses conséquences.

Il faut remarquer que le Christ est seul Rédempteur : « Christus nos redemit, »² à titre principal, essentiel et infiniment suffisant, indépendant de tout autre, universel et seul capable de réaliser la Rédemption dans son « esse ». La coopération de Marie ne peut être que secondaire, accidentelle, parce qu'il a plu à Dieu de l'associer au Rédempteur, et sans que ses mérites ajoutent intrinsèquement aux mérites du Christ. Enfin ce rôle de Marie est subordonné à celui du Christ et universel de façon relative seulement, en ce sens qu'elle ne peut se racheter elle-même. Elle ne peut donc travailler qu'à la rédemption des autres, et n'atteint la Rédemption que dans son « melius esse ».

Cela n'empêche pas qu'elle coopère vraiment au sacrifice du Christ et plus qu'aucune créature humaine. Elle y fait une double oblation :

a) celle du Christ : « Ipsa . . . eundem in Golgotha . . . pro omnibus . . . aeterno Patri obtulit. »³ « Filium ipsa suum ultro obtulit iustitiae divinae. »⁴

b) celle de soi-même : « Ipsa eundem Filium, una cum maternorum jurium maternelle sui amoris holocausto, obtulit. »⁵ « Cum eo commoriens corde. »⁶

Si, par ses douleurs, Marie a physiquement coopéré à l'acquisition du salut comme le Christ dans sa Passion, il est convenable que, proportionnellement, elle participe de même à l'efficiencia de la Passion dans la dispensation des mêmes biens.

C) MARIE, MÈRE SPIRITUELLE :

Le rôle de la mère dans la vie corporelle est essentiellement physique. Or c'est par analogie avec la vie corporelle que Marie est

1. *IIIa*, q. 48, aa. 1, 2, 3, 4.

2. *Gal.*, 3, 13.

3. *PIE XII*, encyclique *Mystici corporis*.

4. *LÉON XIII*, encyclique *Jucunda semper*.

5. *PIE XII*, encyclique *Mystici corporis*.

6. *LÉON XIII*, encyclique *Jucunda semper*.

appelée Mère dans la vie de la grâce. Ce titre de mère se réalisera donc beaucoup plus pleinement si Marie concourt physiquement à nous y engendrer.

La majeure est claire.

À la mineure, nous pouvons dire que la grâce est une entité physique et une vie. L'infusion de la grâce est une naissance : « ex Deo nati sunt. »¹ « Praedestinavit nos in adoptionem filiorum. »² « Nisi quis renatus fuerit. »³ Saint Thomas, parlant de la justification des petits enfants dans le baptême, dit : « Per spiritualem regenerationem a Christo in eos gratia derivatur. »⁴ Saint Louis-M. de Montfort écrit que « tous les vrais enfants de Dieu et prédestinés ont Dieu pour père et Marie pour mère. »⁵ Il semble bien enfin qu'il faille entendre le rôle maternel de Marie, tel que décrit par Léon XIII, comme d'une action physique qui s'exerce par la mère sur les enfants et l'instinct surnaturel comme physique lui aussi qui porte les enfants vers leur mère :

Inde, divino consilio, sic illa coepit advigilare Ecclesiae, sic nobis adesse et favere mater, ut quae sacramenti humanae redemptionis patrandi administra fuerit, eadem gratiae ex illo in omne tempus derivandae esset pariter administra, permissa ei paene immensa potestate. Hinc recte admodum ad Mariam, velut nativo quodam impulsu adductae animae christianae feruntur.⁶

D) MARIE, GLORIFIÉE DANS SON ASSOMPTION :

L'Humanité entière du Christ glorifié est, au ciel, un instrument physique de la grâce, comme elle l'était sur terre. Or Marie, par son Assomption, est glorifiée comme le Christ, dans son corps et dans son âme. Marie peut donc être, comme le Christ, un instrument physique de la grâce, selon son humanité entière.

À la majeure. La nature humaine comprend l'union de l'âme et du corps. La causalité instrumentale de l'Humanité sainte s'est exercée selon l'une et l'autre : sous forme de commandement de sa volonté, par exemple, comme lorsqu'il commandait : « Lazare, veni foras, »⁷ ou encore, par un acte de sa volonté opérant à distance : « vade, filius tuus vivit, »⁸ ou enfin par contact de sa chair, comme dans la guérison de l'aveugle-né : « unxit oculos meos. »⁹ Si ce der-

1. JOAN., 1, 13.

2. ÉPHÈS., 1, 5.

3. JOAN., 3, 3.

4. *Ia IIae*, q.113, a.3, ad 1.

5. *Traité de la vraie dévotion*, n.30.

6. LÉON XIII, encyclique *Adiutricem populi*, dans *Lettres apostoliques*, 4, p.138.

7. JOAN., 11, 43.

8. *Ibid.*, 4, 50.

9. *Ibid.*, 9, 11.

nier contact corporel ne s'exerce plus pour l'ordinaire aujourd'hui que le Christ est monté au ciel, son Humanité sainte n'en reste pas moins un instrument de sa divinité capable d'opérer à distance comme nous avons vu antérieurement.

À la mineure. C'est par l'union substantielle du corps et de l'âme qu'est constituée la personne humaine. Marie, glorifiée dans son corps et dans son âme, n'est pas seulement une nature humaine complète, mais une personne existant comme telle,¹ alors que les autres saints ne sont que des âmes séparées. C'est donc bien la personne de Marie qui existe au ciel et qui peut, selon sa nature entière glorifiée, être un instrument physique de la grâce et agir même à distance, tout comme son Fils, sous la vertu de Dieu, cause principale. Si le Christ a voulu s'associer sa Mère en tout, jusqu'à glorifier sa Mère avec Lui, n'est-ce pas pour pouvoir l'associer davantage à son action dans les âmes? Loin de diminuer, au ciel, le pouvoir de Marie s'est accru, selon cette parole de Léon XIII : « Dici vix potest quantum amplitudinis virtutisque tunc accesserit, quum ad fastigium coelestis gloriae quod dignitatem ejus claritatemque meritorum decebat, est apud Filium assumpta. »²

C'est en toute rigueur de termes que l'Église peut prier : « illos . . . oculos ad nos converte. »³

E) L'ORDRE DES CHOSSES :

Les œuvres de Dieu sont ordonnées. Or si Marie est cause instrumentale physique de la grâce, il semble que la hiérarchie des causes de notre sanctification éclate davantage. Il est donc convenable que Marie ait une telle causalité.

À la majeure. Saint Thomas enseigne : « Mundus enim iste unus dicitur unitate ordinis, secundum quod quaedam ad alias ordinantur. Quaecumque autem sunt a Deo, ordinem habent ad invicem et ad ipsum Deum. »⁴ Ce qui se dit du monde matériel et spirituel doit se retrouver, en quelque façon, dans le monde surnaturel pour y manifester la même Sagesse.

À la mineure. Nous pouvons encore appliquer une loi que saint Thomas énonce sur la nature de cet ordre : « Quia vero ad divinam providentiam pertinet ut ordo servetur in rebus : congruus autem ordo est ut a supremis ad infima proportionaliter descendatur, oportet quod divina providentia secundum quamdam proportionem usque ad res ultimas perveniat. »⁵

1. CH. DE KONINCK, *La piété du Fils*, Québec, 1954, pp.9 à 21.

2. LÉON XIII, encyclique *Adjutricem populi*.

3. Antienne *Salve Regina*.

4. *Ia Pars*, q.47, a.3, c.

5. *Contra Gentiles*, III, cap.78.

Or cet ordre existe en ceci qu'au-dessous de Dieu, il y a le Christ, dans son Humanité sainte unie hypostatiquement au Verbe ; au-dessous du Christ, il y a Marie, dominant toute pure créature par la dignité de son rang et la plénitude de sa grâce. Ce même ordre se retrouverait encore de façon éclatante si, dans la communication de la grâce aux hommes, Marie exerçait, comme l'Humanité du Christ, à titre d'instrument privilégié, une causalité physique. Ce serait alors, comme l'affirme Léon XIII, après saint Bernardin de Sienne, la gradation parfaite : « A Deo in Christum, a Christo in Virginem, a Virgine in nos ordinatissime dispensatur. » ¹

CONCLUSION GÉNÉRALE

Nous avons voulu montrer, au cours des pages précédentes, le rôle de Marie dans le gouvernement de l'Église.

Comme nous l'avons expliqué déjà, le gouvernement de l'Église est à la fois intérieur et extérieur. Le Christ, à son départ, a confié à Pierre et à ses successeurs la direction de son Église : « Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam. » ² « Spiritus Sanctus posuit episcopos regere ecclesiam Dei. » ³ Or dans ce gouvernement extérieur, Marie n'apparaît pas, il est vrai, mais son rôle, bien que caché, n'en est pas moins réel. Il s'étend aux dimensions mêmes des influences surnaturelles par lesquelles le Christ-Chef dirige et vivifie son Corps mystique. C'est donc dans cette vie toute intime que nous avons voulu envisager l'action de Marie, que Léon XIII appelait : « arcana quaedam ejus actio. » ⁴

Pendant sa vie terrestre, comme le dit encore Léon XIII, précieuse fut la discrète autorité de ses conseils, la douceur de ses encouragements, l'efficacité de ses prières.⁵ Maintenant qu'elle est glorieusement élevée au ciel, il est impossible, continue le même pape, de dire tout ce qu'elle a ajouté d'étendue et d'efficacité à son secours.⁶

Les théologiens se sont interrogés sur la nature de cette influence de Marie. Pour certains, Marie, au ciel, serait simplement « cachée tout entière dans l'ordre des grandeurs de sainteté » ⁷ où son rôle

1. Encyclique *Jucunda semper*, dans *Lettres apostoliques*, 4, p.36.

2. MATTH., 16, 18.

3. Act., 20, 28.

4. Encyclique *Adjutricem populi*, dans *Lettres apostoliques*, 5, pp.138-140.

5. « Christianae gentis primitiae jam tum sanctimonia exempli auctoritate consilii, solatii suavitatem, efficacitatem sanctarum precum admirabiliter fovit : verissime quidem mater Ecclesiae atque magistra et regina Apostolorum. » *Ibid.*

6. « Dici vix potest quantum amplitudinis virtutisque tunc accesserit, quum ad fastigium coelestis gloriae quod dignitatem ejus claritatemque meritorum decebat, est apud Filium assumpta. » *Ibid.*

7. C. JOURNET, *L'Église du Verbe incarné*, II, p.422.

consisterait dans une intercession plus puissante, que l'on s'accorde aujourd'hui à reconnaître universelle ; d'autres, insatisfaits d'une simple différence de degré, si grande soit-elle, ont concédé à Marie une action véritable qui serait une intervention directe dans la production de la grâce, en dépendance du Christ.

Après avoir rapporté ces diverses opinions, nous avons opté pour la conclusion suivante : Marie, par sa Royauté et sa Médiation maternelle, exerce dans l'Église une véritable causalité instrumentale physique dans les œuvres de grâce du Christ.

Il était de première importance de nous demander d'abord si la créature peut coopérer à la production de la grâce. Nous avons rejeté pour quelque créature que ce soit la possibilité d'en être l'agent principal. Il n'en va plus de même quand il s'agit de reconnaître à un agent créé une simple causalité instrumentale sous l'influx et l'élévation de Dieu qui seul, comme nous l'avons montré, peut être cause principale de la grâce. Alors, en effet, ce n'est pas à l'instrument mais à la cause principale qu'est attribuée l'action : « *actio autem propria non attribuitur instrumento, sed principali agenti.* »¹

Non seulement l'intervention de la créature est possible dans la production de la grâce, mais Dieu, pour mieux adapter toute l'économie surnaturelle à notre condition terrestre et sensible, a voulu se servir des choses sensibles pour nous communiquer sa vie, et d'abord par l'Humanité sainte de son propre Fils incarné.

*Est autem talis hominis conditio quod ad spiritualia et intelligibilia capienda naturaliter per sensibilia deducatur. Oportuit igitur spiritualia remedia hominibus sub signis sensilibus dari . . . Prima autem et universalis causa humanae salutis est Verbum incarnatum.*²

Il y a déjà là de quoi étonner l'esprit humain. Saint Thomas dit fort bien :

*Si quis diligenter et pie incarnationis mysteria consideret, inveniet tantam sapientiae profunditatem quod omnem humanam cognitionem excedat, secundum illud Apostoli (I Cor., 1.25). Quod stultum est Dei, sapientius est hominibus. Unde fit ut pie consideranti semper magis ac magis admirabiles rationes hujusmodi mysterii manifestentur.*³

La grâce nous a donc été communiquée instrumentalement par l'Humanité du Christ qui, à son tour, en vertu de son pouvoir d'excellence,⁴ a institué d'autres moyens sensibles pour nous continuer ses bienfaits. En effet, « devant soustraire sa présence corporelle à son Église », comme dit saint Thomas, le Christ institua des sacrements

1. *Ia IIae*, q.16, a.1, c.

2. *Contra Gentiles*, IV, cap.56.

3. *Ibid.*, IV, cap.54.

4. *IIIIa*, q.64, a.4, c.

et des ministres pour les dispenser : « Quia igitur Christus corporalem sui praesentiam erat Ecclesiae subtrahendus, necessarium fuit ut alios institueret sibi ministros, qui sacramenta fidelibus dispensarent. » ¹

C'est donc par le moyen de choses sensibles, comme nous y avons insisté au cours de notre travail, que la grâce est produite instrumentalement dans les âmes. Or cette causalité instrumentale est physique. Le Christ est cause principale de la grâce par sa divinité, mais cause instrumentale par son Humanité, tant par sa volonté qui commande que par sa chair qui vivifie. Les sacrements sont cause physique de la grâce qu'ils confèrent réellement à ceux qui n'y mettent pas d'obstacles. Les ministres pareillement sont cause instrumentale physique de la grâce.

La Sagesse divine a donc su, dans la communication de ses dons les plus élevés, s'adapter à notre condition. La causalité physique ne rabaisse pas la dignité de l'action divine. Elle en manifeste, au contraire, de façon plus éclatante, la sagesse et la miséricorde.

C'est dans cet ordre de causalité que nous avons voulu situer l'action de Marie.

Même si nous reconnaissons à Marie une causalité instrumentale physique dans la production de la grâce, cela ne veut pas dire que nous la mettions sur le plan des instruments que nous venons de mentionner. Marie n'est ni un instrument conjoint, comme l'Humanité du Christ, ni comme les ministres, investis de pouvoirs hiérarchiques, ni comme les sacrements, instruments inertes. En signalant la difficulté de localiser cette causalité instrumentale de Marie, nous avons nettement montré que cette difficulté vient précisément de ce que le rôle de Marie est unique en raison des titres que nous rappellerons immédiatement.

Il est parfaitement à propos de reprendre le mot de saint Thomas que nous citons au sujet de l'Incarnation : « Si quis diligenter et pie incarnationis mysteria consideret, » il y trouve une sagesse si profonde qu'elle dépasse toute connaissance humaine. Le mystère de l'Incarnation, c'est proprement le mystère du Verbe assumant notre chair, mais dans sa totalité — saint Thomas emploie le pluriel « mysteria », c'est aussi le mystère de Celle qui a concouru à donner au Verbe la chair qui l'a fait de notre race. Ce qu'il y a donc de profondeur et de sagesse dans ce mystère du Verbe Incarné doit se retrouver proportionnellement dans le mystère de Celle en qui il s'incarne. Saint Bernard l'a très bien montré dans les lignes suivantes : « Quod sola per se Trinitas in sola et cum sola Virgine voluit operari, soli datum est nosse, cui soli datum est experiri. » ² « Si vous voulez comprendre la Mère, disait saint Louis-M. de Montfort, comprenez le Fils. » ³

1. *Contra Gentiles*, IV, cap.74.

2. *Hom. super Missus est*, IV, S. Bernard et Notre-Dame, textes authentiques, p.148.

3. *Traité de la vraie dévotion*, n.12.

La Maternité divine établit donc entre Marie et les Personnes divines des relations si étroites que, bien que restant de notre propre nature, elle appartient à l'ordre hypostatique. Tout en elle est désormais marqué par ces rapports, et, pour autant, aucune autre créature ne peut entrer en comparaison avec elle. La vraie mesure de Marie vient de sa Maternité divine.

Il n'est donc pas surprenant que Dieu s'associe dans ses œuvres Celle qu'il a élevée à un tel degré d'intimité avec lui. Mise à part par une prédestination singulière, préparée uniquement pour son Fils, comblée de grâce dans son Immaculée-Conception, élevée à une telle plénitude que l'ange lui-même, en possession de la vision béatifique,¹ s'incline devant elle, Marie sera l'Associée du Christ dans la Rédemption du genre humain. Elle-même rachetée par avance d'une manière supérieure, elle devient, dans l'Incarnation, la représentante personnelle de l'humanité entière,² et traite avec Dieu, au nom de tous, du salut de tous.

Par une revanche merveilleuse de la Sagesse divine, à côté du nouvel Adam, il y a donc une nouvelle Ève qui coopère avec lui et nous mérite, par sa communauté de souffrances et l'offrande de son propre Fils, toutes les grâces de la Rédemption. Il est seul Rédempteur, mais Marie a mérité par la plus haute convenance en union avec son Fils. Sans aucun doute, comme nous l'avons établi par plusieurs raisons, au cours de notre travail, l'ordre nouveau, tant du côté de Marie que du Sauveur, l'emporte incomparablement sur celui qui a précédé. Le « fiat » de Marie et celui du Sauveur entrant dans ce monde forment une même volonté rédemptrice dans laquelle il n'y aura jamais de rupture. Déjà dans cet acte initial, toute la Rédemption est contenue en principe : « Substantia . . . solet dici prima inchoatio cuiuscumque rei, et maxime quando tota res sequens continetur virtute in principio. »³

L'application de ce principe que saint Thomas rappelle à propos de la foi n'est pas étrangère à notre sujet puisque saint Thomas l'étend à tout ordre de choses. Nous pouvons donc dire pareillement que le consentement de Marie, qui nous a donné le Sauveur, contenait en substance toute l'économie du salut.

L'Église, c'est le Christ, comme le rappelle Pie XII, après saint Paul : « Quod quidem gentium Doctor ad Corinthios scribens affirmat, cum, nihil aliud adjiciens, « Christum » Ecclesiam vocat. »⁴

Or si l'Église, c'est le Christ, nous pouvons dire que déjà, en ce moment de l'Incarnation, l'Église est contenue dans le sein de Marie :

1. *In Salutationem Angelicam expositio*, Opusc., II, Marietti, n.1114 : « Ideo exhibeo tibi reverentiam, quia me excellis in plenitudine gratiae. »

2. LÉON XIII, encyclique *Octobri mense*, dans *Lettres apostoliques*, 3, p.96.

3. *Ila Ille*, q.4, a.1, c.

4. Encyclique *Mystici corporis*, dans *Actes de Pie XII*, 5, p.136.

« Universi ergo, quotquot cum Christo jungimur . . . de Mariae utero egressi sumus, tamquam corporis instar cohaerentis cum capite. »¹ Les rapports de Marie avec le Christ se complètent donc nécessairement par ses rapports avec l'Église, par suite de cette unité intrinsèque du plan rédempteur. Pour cette raison qu'elle est mère du Christ, Marie est mère de tous ses membres. « An non Christi mater Mariae? Nostra igitur et Mater est. »²

Si Jésus-Christ, le chef des hommes, est né en elle, les prédestinés, qui sont membres de ce chef, doivent aussi naître en elle par une suite nécessaire. Une même mère ne met pas au monde la tête ou le chef sans les membres, ni les membres sans la tête : autrement ce serait un monstre de nature ; de même, dans l'ordre de la grâce, le chef et les membres naissent d'une même mère.³

Or cette maternité, commencée à l'Incarnation, complétée au Calvaire par un nouveau titre,⁴ comme dit Pie XII, dans les douleurs de la compassion corédemptrice se poursuit constamment dans la formation du corps mystique, lequel se réalise dans le temps par l'apport de chaque génération jusqu'à ce que le Christ soit parfaitement formé : « et ipsum dedit caput supra omnem ecclesiam, quae est corpus ipsius et plenitudo ejus. »⁵

L'activité spirituelle de Marie dans le corps mystique est donc aussi constante que celle de la mère vis-à-vis de l'enfant qu'elle porte en son sein. C'est la comparaison très juste que saint Louis-M. de Montfort emprunte à saint Augustin parlant de l'Église.⁶

Ce rôle maternel s'exerce par sa médiation. Marie dispense aux âmes, non pas à la manière d'un simple fonctionnaire, mais à titre de mère, les biens acquis en union avec le Sauveur, au prix de ses propres douleurs à elle-même. Élevée à un tel sommet de grandeur et d'excellence dans le royaume de la grâce, elle y participe à l'excellence même du Christ, exerçant, en dépendance de lui, une Royauté non seulement honorifique, mais véritable et efficace sur les esprits et les volontés. Cette action s'étend même, comme s'exprime Pie XII, « jusqu'au plus intime des cœurs et les touche dans leur essence profonde en ce qu'ils ont de spirituel et d'immortel. »⁷

À quelle autre créature, à part l'Humanité du Christ, a-t-il été donné un tel pouvoir? Et si, comme nous nous sommes appliqués à

1. S. PIE X, encyclique *Ad diem illum*, dans *Actes*, I, p.76.

2. *Ibid.*, p.76.

3. S. LOUIS-M. DE MONTFORT, *Traité de la vraie dévotion*, n.32.

4. PIE XII : « ob novum etiam doloris gloriaeque titulum. » *Mystici corporis*, dans *Actes*, 5, p.192.

5. *Éphes.*, 1, 22-23.

6. *Traité de la vraie dévotion*, n.33.

7. Discours du 1^{er} nov. 1954 ; dans *Osservatore romano*, 5 nov. 1954.

le démontrer, Marie ne se distinguait pas de façon particulière de tous les autres saints, si elle n'était en tout cela qu'une simple cause morale comme n'importe quelle autre, comment pourrait-on parler avec tant d'insistance de son action, comme le fait Pie XII, dans les termes mêmes où il est parlé de l'action du Christ, même en rappelant qu'il s'agit là d'une participation à ce que le Christ possède en plénitude ? ¹

Marie seule, de par la volonté de Dieu, possède cette « domination dans les âmes des élus ». ² Son action doit donc se distinguer de celle de tous les autres saints, non pas seulement en une supériorité quelconque, mais spécifiquement, conformément au rôle qui lui est propre en tant que mère et associée du Christ dans la formation de ses membres. « Dieu le Fils veut se former et, pour ainsi dire, s'incarner tous les jours par sa chère mère, dans ses membres. » ³

Si le Christ, par son Humanité sainte, est cause instrumentale physique de la grâce ; si, même du haut du ciel, il agit à distance pour infuser cette grâce dans ses membres, Marie de même, instrument séparé mais privilégié, d'un ordre à part qui lui est propre à titre de Mère du Corps mystique, doit pouvoir pareillement, par la vertu de cette même cause principale infinie qu'est Dieu, produire physiquement la grâce dans les âmes.

Non seulement rien ne répugne à ce qu'il en soit ainsi, mais, au contraire, de sérieuses raisons que nous avons longuement élaborées nous autorisent à penser que seule la causalité instrumentale physique de Marie, dans la production de la grâce, répond adéquatement à ses titres et fonctions de mère, médiatrice et reine.

L'Écriture nous en fournit une preuve dans la Visitation, unanimement interprétée dans la Tradition et même le Magistère, comme une influence physique de Marie dans la sanctification de Jean-Baptiste.

De nombreux passages du Magistère nous semblent n'avoir toute leur force que dans une interprétation semblable de l'action de Marie. L'encyclique *Ad coeli Reginam*, que nous avons longuement analysée sur ce point, semble apporter une orientation positive en ce sens. Marie, en effet, y est mise, en quelque sorte, au rang des instruments auxquels la théologie traditionnelle reconnaît une causalité physique dans la production de la grâce, tels l'Humanité du Christ et les sacrements.

La Tradition patristique et ecclésiastique, la liturgie, en de multiples passages, s'éclairent, à la lumière des principes que nous énonçons, et nous découvrent de nombreuses affirmations en ce sens, comme voilées jusqu'ici.

1. « Omne quod participatur determinatur ad modum participati, et sic partialiter habetur, et non secundum omnem perfectionis modum. » *Contra Gentiles*, I, cap.32.

2. *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la sainte Vierge*, n.37.

3. *Ibid.*, n.31.

Enfin, il semble qu'à bien considérer les choses, notre raison est plus satisfaite, en considérant que Marie, parfaitement associée à toute l'œuvre du Sauveur, le soit jusqu'au bout dans la production même de la grâce. Son titre de corédemptrice, bien qu'il n'ait rien ajouté à l'essence même de la Rédemption, n'est cependant pas une vaine dénomination honorifique. Il semble exiger, par la plus haute convenance, que les biens de la Rédemption qui sont siens, en quelque manière, soient effectivement distribués aussi par Celle qui les a mérités. Mère spirituelle, Marie le sera dans toute la force du mot si, effectivement, elle engendre les âmes et les régénère dans la grâce : « Mater gratiae », comme l'Église l'appelle, depuis des siècles.

L'Assomption, qui élève Marie au terme de ses honneurs et de sa puissance, semble autoriser, par une nouvelle raison, ce que nous avons soutenu dans ce travail. Marie, glorifiée dans son Assomption, c'est la mère et corédemptrice constituée dans sa personne même, en corps et en âme, auprès de son Fils, apte ainsi de toute manière à être l'instrument de Dieu.

Dans cette perspective où nous l'avons montrée, l'action de Marie répond mieux à l'ordre même de la Sagesse divine. Le monde surnaturel, comme le monde sensible, trouve sa beauté dans la parfaite harmonie et l'unité de ses parties. Sous le Christ, Dieu fait homme, seul Rédempteur et Médiateur, il y a Marie, uniquement de notre race, mère de Dieu, associée du Rédempteur et mère de ses membres mystiques qui, par son action maternelle atteint instrumentalement la production même de la grâce en eux.

Tel nous apparaît le rôle de Marie dans le gouvernement de l'Église. Disons, en un dernier mot, que si la grâce est donnée à chacun « secundum mensuram donationis Christi, »¹ Marie a ses privilégiés, selon l'ordre même d'excellence qu'ils occupent : ordre de *hiérarchie* : le pape, les évêques, les prêtres et les fidèles ; ordre de *sainteté* : les âmes les plus saintes sont précisément telles grâce à une action plus efficace de Marie, à qui seule, dit saint Louis-M. de Montfort, « Dieu a donné... le pouvoir d'entrer dans les voies les plus sublimes et les plus secrètes de la perfection, et d'y faire entrer les autres. »²

HENRI-MARIE GUINDON, S.M.M.

1. *Éphes.*, 4, 7.

2. *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la sainte Vierge*, n.45.

The Paradoxes of Aristotle's Theory of Education in the Light of Recent Controversies

The reader who examines closely the passages in which Aristotle discusses the teaching of philosophy to young men may well wonder whether the practice of the ancients was not at variance with their principles in this matter. According to a well-established custom to which the Platonic dialogues already bear witness and of which various traces are discernible at that time, the young student who wished to take up the study of philosophy under the tutorship of a competent master did so immediately upon completing the cycle of preliminary studies at the school of the grammarian and the rhetor. Yet on two occasions at least, Aristotle, who seems to have conformed to that tradition, questions the advisability and, indeed, the very possibility of teaching philosophy to a boy of that age. Professor Étienne Gilson, who, with his customary brilliance and flair for the paradoxical, has recently brought this difficulty to the attention of his colleagues,¹ assumes that it has not been adequately answered by Aristotle himself and expresses wonder at the fact that it has never been noticed or, if noticed, not felt as serious by students of classical and Scholastic philosophy. Whether Mr. Gilson's eloquent plea will prompt any professor of philosophy to drop his courses and start searching for another job is more than doubtful. It does invite us to look into the problem, however, and that, after all, is perhaps the only point the author was really trying to make.² A more careful

1. É. GILSON, "Note sur un texte de saint Thomas," in *Revue thomiste*, Vol.LIV (1954), pp.148-152, in which no attempt is made to provide a solution. In a lecture on this topic, published almost simultaneously under the title, *Thomas Aquinas and Our Colleagues*, Princeton, 1953, the same author takes a more positive stand: having apparently succeeded in casting out St. Thomas with Aquinas, he proceeds to reintroduce him into the classroom by suggesting that, in the case of the Christian, faith may come to the rescue of reason and assist it in grasping the more abstract notions of metaphysics; cf. p.17. He is the first to grant, however, that this answer, which he regards as tentative, would have no value for a pagan like Aristotle. See also the discussion of Prof. Gilson's views by D. H. SALMAN, "L'enseignement de la philosophie aux jeunes d'après Aristote, saint Thomas et M. É. Gilson," in *Laval théologique et philosophique*, Vol.XI (1955), pp.9-24. — The present article reproduces in slightly expanded form some remarks found in our book, *Christianisme et culture philosophique au cinquième siècle: la querelle de l'âme humaine en Occident*, Paris, 1959, pp.177-189.

2. *Thomas Aquinas and Our Colleagues*, p.25, n.10: "It is always untimely to question the wisdom of current practice. One of the most frequent answers to such questions is: then what do you suggest we should do? My only answer to this is: we should put our heads together and consider the problem..." Cf. *ibid.*, p.18: "It may well be that... (my) conclusion does not prove satisfactory. Then one should not waste

scrutiny of the texts invoked will not only reveal that the alledged inconsistency is merely an apparent one but also bring to light an important and often neglected aspect of classical education. For the sake of clarity, let us begin by relating briefly and without commentary the contents of the two passages in question.

In Book I, chapter 3, of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle deals succinctly, by way of introduction to the whole treatise, with the manner in which moral science should be studied and then asks to whom this science should be taught. We are told in this connection that the young man is not an apt student of moral and political philosophy for two reasons. On the one hand, he lacks the experience of life and of men. This experience can come only with time and it is indispensable in this case, since it is precisely human actions that constitute the subject of ethics and provide its proper principles.¹ On the other hand, the young man does not dominate his passions sufficiently. From a purely speculative point of view moral philosophy presents little interest. The only real profit that may be gained from its study is that it help us become better men by facilitating the development of the moral virtues. In order to obtain this result, however, one must be prepared to regulate his conduct according to the dictates of reason. It so happens that the young man, and the description here fits the person who is young in character as well, is easily led astray by the unruliness of his lower appetites. Rather than follow the injunctions of reason, he is more likely to pursue each object as passion directs.²

Book VI, chapter 8, reverts to the same topic from a slightly different point of view. Dealing this time with the intellectual virtues, Aristotle again stresses the fact that young men, being inexperienced, are not yet in a position to acquire practical wisdom.³ To this consideration he now adds that, for that matter, they are not good metaphysicians or good natural philosophers either. The science of metaphysics is not readily accessible and presupposes a training that they can hardly be expected to possess at that early age. At best,

any time on refuting it. The only useful thing to do would be to find another answer to the problem raised by the texts of Thomas Aquinas."

1. *Nic. Ethics*, I, chap. 3, 1095 a 2.

2. *Ibid.*, 1095 a 4 sq. Cf. SHAKESPEARE, *Troilus and Cressida*, II, 2, 163-171 :

Paris and Troilus, you have both said well ;
And on the cause and question now in hand
Have glaz'd, but superficially ; not much
Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought
Unfit to hear moral philosophy.
The reasons you allege do more conduce
To the hot passion of distempered blood
Than to make up a free determination
'Twixt right and wrong . . .

3. *Nic. Ethics*, VI, chap. 8, 1142 a 14 sq.

they will be able to repeat the words they have heard, without any true understanding of their meaning. As for natural science, it embraces the entire realm of nature, which, by reason of its vastness, requires years of investigation. Aristotle himself, as we know, spent much of his life exploring it, cataloguing its various species and sub-species, and tracing their "history." What the young student lacks this time is an adequate experience, not of life, but of nature, on which this science rests.¹ There is, in reality, within the province of philosophy, only one field in which he has any chance of being distinctly proficient at that age, namely, mathematics. Less abstruse than metaphysics, and less dependent upon the knowledge of singulars than natural philosophy, this discipline can be mastered without too much difficulty and become the object of a truly scientific inquiry even on the part of an adolescent.²

If one accepts this reasoning, the efforts of the philosopher who attempts to communicate his knowledge to young minds are doomed in advance to failure. Instead of wasting his time and that of his students, he would be better off, as Hamlet says, to buy a cart and conduct mules. One could only smile indulgently at the naïveté of a teacher who, with owlish seriousness, would begin by explaining to his pupils the futility of his trying to impart to them any real knowledge of philosophy, and then calmly set about the task of exposing his science in great detail to these same and by now utterly bewildered students. Not only ancient education but a large portion of Mediaeval education and of our own as well, in the degree to which it takes its lead from Aristotle, would be the victim of a gross illusion. The question, we gather, is more complex than the foregoing remarks suggest. What we should like to show is that it had not escaped Aristotle and that it is possible to find within the framework of his doctrine the elements of a solution.

The key to our problem, it seems, lies in a notion which modern scholarship has generally overlooked or to which it has not given due prominence, I refer to the Aristotelian concept of *paideia*. The word *paideia* has, of course, become very familiar to us, and Professor Jaeger's classic work, *Paideia, The Ideals of Greek Culture*,³ has done much in recent years to popularize it. Mr. Jaeger's book, however, does not encompass Aristotle, and, in any case, merely takes the term *paideia* in its broadest acceptation, without making an effort to ascertain its various meanings. We may concede immediately that the expression has been put to a wide variety of uses in the course of its long history, from its humble appearance in Aeschylus⁴ as a

1. *Nic. Ethics*, VI, chap.8, 1142 a 18 sq.

2. Cf. *ibid.*, 1142 a 12 and 17, where, as regards mathematics, the young man is called σοφός.

3. English translation by GILBERT HIGHET, 3 vols., Oxford, 1939-1945.

4. *Seven against Thebes*, 18.

synonym for *τροφή*, the older and more traditional word for child rearing, down through the Hellenistic period, at which time its meaning is extended in such a way as to include, finally, the totality of man's intellectual and moral development.¹ In Aristotle himself, it is applied to the training of animals² as well as to all the degrees of the physical, intellectual, and moral formation of the human being from the earliest childhood to the age of twenty-one or thereabouts.³ Elsewhere in his works, however, the same term has clearly received new impositions, the exact significance of which is not at once apparent. Although Aristotle has never treated the question exhaustively and for its own sake, at least in the works that have come down to us, it is still possible, by gathering the various texts in which *paideia* is employed in this narrower and more specialized sense, to determine the main articulations of his thought.

We shall discover a first element of that thought if we turn to the famous discussion concerning the first principle of knowledge in Book IV, chapter 4 (1006 a 4 sq.), of the *Metaphysics*. This principle, on which all subsequent knowledge depends in a certain manner, is not demonstrable, says Aristotle, not because it is false, but for the simple reason that it is immediately evident. To try to establish its truth by way of deduction from previously known premises would be absurd. It is impossible that there should be demonstration of absolutely everything. Sooner or later, lest one be faced with an infinite regression which would preclude all demonstration and all science, one must arrive at a proposition that is a principle and in no way a conclusion, that is to say, a proposition whose truth does not depend upon that of another proposition that would be prior to it. Among these self-evident principles none is more obvious than the one which enunciates the opposition between being and non-being, or, as it is commonly called, the principle of noncontradiction. And yet there are some persons who insist that even this principle be the object of a demonstration in the strict sense. Such an attitude betrays an incapacity to discern what is evident and can only be explained, adds Aristotle, by a lack of education, *ἀπαιδευσία*.

From these remarks it is permissible to infer that the student who wishes to acquire *paideia* must first learn to recognize a principle as opposed to a conclusion or, to put it very simply, be able to distinguish between what is known and what is unknown. He will be

1. It is this idea that Cicero has rendered in Latin by the word *humanitas*. On *paideia* in this sense, see H. I. MARROU, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, Paris, 1938, pp. 552-555.

2. See, for instance, in the *Hist. of Animals*, IX, chap. 46, 630 b 19, the story of the elephant who had been taught (*paideuein*) to kneel in the presence of the king.

3. Thus in the treatise *Peri paideias* which takes up the whole last part of the *Politics* (VII, chap. 13 to the end).

disciplinable, i.e. capable of receiving a discipline, to the extent that he possesses this aptitude.¹ An example taken from natural philosophy may serve to illustrate the point. Before attempting to demonstrate anything in that science, it is necessary to accept the existence of nature as Aristotle defines it in the *Physics*.² That there is such a thing as nature in this precise sense is immediately evident.³ Anyone pretending to prove the existence of nature would be striving to establish what is manifest by what is not and would do away with the entire science of nature by destroying its very principle. A man blind from birth might just as well try to reason about colors.⁴

It is not difficult to see that this initial capacity already presupposes a certain training on the part of the student. There are, of course, principles that are rooted in very common notions and that, upon being enunciated, are readily understood by all men. Anyone who knows what a part and a whole are, or is familiar with the meaning of the word equal, will agree that the whole is greater than the part and that two things equal to a third are equal to each other. To deny these truths would be to stop thinking altogether. The matter is somewhat more complicated when we come to the proper principles of each science. It is not enough here that we learn what the terms signify. Albeit indemonstrable, these principles require an explanation. The teacher who manifests their truth by means of examples or in any other way is already making a valuable contribution to the intellectual advancement of his students. Thus, strictly speaking, one does not demonstrate that all mobile beings are composed of matter and form or that nature acts for an end ; yet the painstaking examination to which these principles are subjected in the *Physics*⁵ is in itself a sufficient indication of the fact that they are not within the reach of any chance comer. An accurate grasp of these truths is all the more important since even a slight error with respect to them may have far-reaching consequences later on. Any attempt to impart a philosophical discipline should, therefore, begin with an elucidation of the proper principles of that discipline, and it is only once this preliminary work has been accomplished that the student will be ready to go on to something else.

This determination, however, important though it may be, still represents only the first component of the philosophical *paideia* set

1. Cf. ST. THOMAS, *In Metaph. Arist.*, Book IV, lesson 6, n.607. I am indebted to Prof. Maurice Dionne, of Laval University, for much of the information contained in the pages that follow immediately, but wish to assume full responsibility for any error of interpretation that I may have committed.

2. *Physics*, II, chap.1, 192 b 22.

3. *Ibid.*, 193 a 2.

4. *Ibid.*, 193 a 7.

5. *Physics*, I, chap.7, 189 b 30 sq. ; *ibid.*, II, chap.8, 198 b 10 sq.

forth by Aristotle. We shall encounter another component of that doctrine if we revert to the passage of the *Nicomachean Ethics* which originally gave rise to our discussion. The issue this time is no longer that of the principles of the various sciences but of their proper modes. Working from the premise that the mode according to which the truth is manifested in a given science is contingent upon the subject of that science, Aristotle reminds his reader that he must not expect the same measure of precision in all the philosophical disciplines. It again pertains to the *pepaideumenos* to be acquainted with these different modes and, by the same token, with the degree of accuracy that may be anticipated in each one of these sciences.¹ Moral philosophy in particular, by reason of the extreme contingency of its matter, namely, human actions, offers little certitude. Whoever undertakes to write a treatise on this subject will hardly be able to do more than to indicate the truth "broadly and in outline."² Whereas natural phenomena present a remarkable uniformity at all times, and are for the most part the same everywhere, — the properties of fire, for instance, are identical in Greece and in Persia — the just, the noble, and the lawful may vary from one country to another.³ It is on the grounds of this variability of ethical standards, observes Aristotle, that some people have been led to deny the existence of natural right and the validity of even the most common principles of morality. While carefully shunning this extreme, the moral philosopher must bear in mind that particular circumstances may cause the proper principles of this science to change when they are applied to concrete cases. Generally speaking, it is true that a deposit should be returned to its owner ; this is practically the definition of justice. Yet there are times when it would be dangerous and even unjust to return an object to its lawful proprietor. Such examples could be multiplied at will. The general principles of moral science can never dispense the man who acts from taking into account the indefinitely changeable circumstances attendant upon each one of his actions.⁴

1. *Nic. Ethics*, I, chap.3, 1094 b 24.

2. *Ibid.*, 1094 b 20:

3. *Ibid.*, V, chap.7, 1134 b 25 ; I, chap.3, 1094 b 14. Cf. PLATO, *Laws*, X, 889 e : " In the first place, my dear friend, these people would say that the Gods exist not by nature, but by art, and by the laws of states, which are different in different places, according to the agreement of those who make them ; and that the honourable is one thing by nature and another thing by law, and that the principles of justice have no existence at all in nature, but that mankind are always disputing about them and altering them ; and that the alterations which are made by art and by law have no basis in nature, but are of authority for the moment and at the time at which they are made. These, my friends, are the sayings of wise men, poets and prose writers, which find a way into the minds of youth . . ." (JOWETT translation.) On the mutability of these moral principles, see ST. THOMAS, *Ia IIae*, q.94, a.4.

4. For this reason, observes Aristotle (*ibid.*, VI, chap.11, 1143 b 11), one should always take into consideration the advice of older and more experienced persons, even if they are

A doctor cannot prescribe the same treatment to all his patients even if they are afflicted with the same illness ; it may be that, for reasons peculiar to himself, one of these patients is incapable of withstanding this treatment.¹ Likewise, a trainer cannot form in an absolutely identical manner all the athletes entrusted to his care, if only because they do not all have the same physical dispositions.² His art consists precisely in his ability to use to the best advantage the virtualities inherent in each subject. Thus it would be unwise, to say the least, to teach moral philosophy to a student who would have no idea of the mode of that science and, consequently, of the nature and value of the conclusions reached therein.

Each science, then, possesses its proper mode, with which one must become familiar before any effort is made to come to grips with the problems it strives to resolve. Were we to pursue this inquiry and extend it to the other philosophical disciplines, we should discover, for example, that mathematics, thanks to the rigor and precision of its mode, is the science that presents for us the highest degree of certitude and stands as the prototype of all the other sciences ; that, contrary to mathematics, which prescind from sensible matter and motion, natural philosophy demonstrates from all four principal causes, but must be satisfied in most cases with *a posteriori* demonstrations ;³ that First Philosophy, whose object is entirely free from matter and therefore immutable, studies all things in the light of the most universal causes and remains the highest, most divine, and most inaccessible of the sciences.⁴ There are manifestly some very significant divergences among these various disciplines. The fact that we refer to them indiscriminately as sciences should not delude us into thinking that they are all sciences in exactly the same fashion. The *pepaideumenos*, as Aristotle describes him, is precisely the man who has become aware of these differences and who knows to what kind of proof he may look forward in each case, who will not demand of an orator, for example, the rigorous procedure typical of the mathematician, any more than he will be content with probable arguments in geometry.⁵

unable to support this advice with rational arguments. Their experience, if nothing else, often allows them to judge soundly with regard to practical matters. The "intellectuals" about whom so much evil has been spoken in our time are precisely the armchair philosophers who pretend to solve in a purely abstract and theoretical manner, and without reference to the particular conditions of human existence, the most concrete problems of moral and political life.

1. *Nic. Ethics*, X, chap. 9, 1180 b 7.

2. *Ibid.*, 1180 b 10. Whence, concludes Aristotle, the superiority of private *paideia*, which adapts itself more easily to the particular needs of each subject.

3. For the distinction between the natural philosopher and the mathematician, see *Physics*, II, chap. 2, 193 b 22 sq. ; *Metaphysics*, II, chap. 3, 995 a 15, etc.

4. Cf. *Metaphysics*, I, chap. 2, 982 a 5 sq. ; chap. 1, 1026 a 7 sq.

5. *Nic. Ethics*, I, chap. 3, 1094 b 24. See the corresponding passage in the *Metaphysics*, II, chap. 3, 995 a 6 sq., where, as befits the context, the question is posed in the

These considerations help us to understand, among other things, the use of the word *paideia* in an important and often misconstrued passage of the treatise *On the Parts of Animals*, which reads as follows :

In every speculative inquiry, the humblest as well as the most noble, there are, it seems, two distinct habits of mind (ἔξις) : one that may be called science (ἐπιστήμη) of the object, and the other a certain παιδεία. For it pertains to the πεπαιδευμένος to be able to form, with accuracy, a judgment concerning the mode (τρόπος), whether good or bad, employed by the speaker in his treatment of a question. To be well-trained (πεπαιδεῦσθαι) is precisely to have this capacity ; such is, indeed, the man of whom we say that he possesses a general formation (τὸν ὅλως πεπαιδευμένον).¹

The *paideia* that the present context distinguishes clearly from science (ἐπιστήμη) is here again a habitus or determination² having as its proper object the method or mode of procedure proper to a particular discipline. Since the young student presumably has not had the opportunity to investigate the subject thoroughly himself, he cannot boast of a perfect knowledge of it and is not prepared, in consequence, to formulate a judgment bearing specifically on the truth or falseness of the conclusions proposed by the speaker.³ In this respect his position remains inferior to that of the master. But he is not in a state of complete ignorance either. His knowledge of the principles and of the proper mode of that science already enables him to assess or judge (κρίνειν),⁴ from this more restricted standpoint, the views put forward by another person. This capacity may be limited to a single discipline or it may extend to a number of other

most general terms : " Some people do not listen to a speaker unless he speaks mathematically, others unless he gives instances, while others expect him to cite a poet as witness. And some want to have everything done accurately, while others are annoyed by accuracy, either because they cannot follow the connexion of thought or because they regard it as pettifoggery. For accuracy has something of this character, so that as in trade so in argument some people think it mean. Hence one must be already trained (πεπαιδεῦσθαι) to know how to take each sort of argument, since it is absurd to seek at the same time knowledge and the way of attaining knowledge ; and it is not easy to get even one of the two. The minute accuracy of mathematics is not to be demanded in all cases, but only in the things which have no matter. Hence its method is not that of natural science ; for presumably the whole of nature has matter. Hence we must inquire first what nature is : for thus we shall also see what natural science treats of . . . "

1. ARISTOTLE, *On the Parts of Animals*, I, chap.1, 639 a 1 sq.

2. The word ἔξις is taken here in the second of the two senses indicated in the *Metaphysics* (V, chap. 20, 1022 b 10), and designates the quality by which a subject is well or ill disposed in itself or with regard to something else. Cf. *Categories*, 8 b 27 - 9 a 12.

3. *On the Parts of Animals*, I, chap.1, 639 a 13. It is one thing to criticize a conclusion, and another to criticize the method by which an author pretends to arrive at that conclusion.

4. The *pepaideumenos* is always presented as having this power to " judge." See, in addition, *Nic. Ethics*, I, chap.3, 1094 b 29 ; *Politics*, III, chap.6, 1282 a 7.

branches. The true *pepaideumenos*, as Aristotle remarks, is obviously the one who is thus competent in all or nearly all fields of knowledge.¹

One is hardly justified, therefore, in equating purely and simply *paideia* with dialectic, defined as the "method or art or reasoning about any given problem,"² or in looking upon it as being roughly synonymous with our own conveniently vague "general culture," as other more recent scholars have done.³ Aristotle had something far more definite in mind. His older translators showed greater penetration when they either resorted to a paraphrase to suggest its meaning⁴ or, as in the case of William of Moerbeke, simply transliterated the word,⁵ thereby intimating that they were dealing with a properly philosophical term for which no exact equivalent could be found in their own idiom.

Thanks to this preparation, the young man will be able to penetrate more deeply into the study of the different sciences and gradually become more proficient in them as time goes on. It is scarcely possible from this moment forward to determine down to the last iota the contents of a program that may comprise many degrees. The sum of knowledge that a student who is hardly more than a beginner in philosophy can assimilate will depend on numerous factors, such as his native ability, his previous education, the quality of his teachers, and his own personal efforts.⁶ What matters here is that we

1. *On the Parts of Animals*, I, chap.1, 639 a 9 ; *Nic. Ethics*, I, chap.3, 1095 a 1.

2. ARISTOTLE, *Topics*, I, chap.1, 100 a 18 ; cf. J.-M. LE BLOND, *Aristote, philosophe de la vie*, Paris, 1945, p.129, with whom we are presently taking issue. According to our interpretation, Aristotle's *paideia* obviously includes dialectic or, better still, logic, which it presupposes and which has as its object the mode *common* to all the sciences ; but it also embraces, as we have seen, the mode *proper* to each science.

3. E.g., P. LOUIS, *Aristote, Les parties des animaux, texte et traduction*, Paris, 1956, p.XXI. There is no reason whatever to suppose that Aristotle is writing here for the benefit of the general public, as opposed to students and specialists (see also, in the same vein, LE BLOND, *op cit.*, p.128, n.3). An interpretation such as this one mistakes completely the meaning of *pepaideumenos*. Aristotle simply begins, as he usually does, by exposing the *paideia* of the science with which he proposes to deal, before delving into the science itself. LOUIS' suggestion, according to which one should henceforth distinguish three types of Aristotelian writings instead of two, namely, the esoteric or acroamatic treatises, the exoteric books, and the works intended for the general public, harks back to the same basic misconception and scarcely deserves a better fate.

4. Cf. W. OGLE, *Aristotle On the Parts of Animals, translated, with an Introduction and Notes*, London, 1882 (reprinted in R. McKEON, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, N.Y., 1941, p.643 sq.), who renders *paideia* by "educational acquaintance." Despite minor shortcomings, Ogle's text appears to be far more satisfactory than any of the other modern translations of this treatise. The author is fully aware of the problem posed by the use of *paideia* in the passage under scrutiny, even if he does not dwell upon it ; cf. *ibid.*, p.141, n.1.

5. WILLIAM OF MOERBEKE, *De Partibus Animalium, ad locum*.

6. On the three principles of education : nature (*φύσις*), habit (*ἔθος*), and reason (*λόγος*), cf. ARISTOTLE, *Politics*, VII, chap.12, 1332 a 40 ; PLUTARCH, *On the Education of Children*, 2 A.

realize that between *ἀπαιδευσία*, or the total lack of education, and wisdom, which remains the preserve of a small number of exceptionally gifted natures and which is attained only after many years of study, there exists a preliminary stage designed to supply the budding philosopher with the tools indispensable to the attainment of his goal.

Since this initiation is normally acquired during the adolescent years, the term *paideia* adopted by Aristotle is fully justified and offers an example, among many others, of the philosophical promotion from which current language has frequently benefited. On this score, the ancients manifested greater restraint than many of our more sophisticated contemporaries. Instead of having recourse to strange or unknown expressions to convey new thoughts, they simply borrowed the "words of the tribe," on which they made further impositions. This procedure has the undeniable advantage of allowing the beginner to use notions firmly grounded in everyday reality as steppingstones towards more abstract, and therefore less familiar, ideas. The term *ὕλη*, raised in the *Physics* to the level of "prime matter," originally meant "timber," as every student of classical philosophy knows. Similarly, the verb *λογίζεσθαι*, which reappears in a slightly modified form in the formidable "syllogism" proper to the third operation of the mind, had first of all designated the very simple act by which the young Greek counted his pebbles. A philosopher could just as easily appropriate a word like *paideia* and make use of it to express a new phase of the multiple education to which the young man was subjected throughout the entire first part of his life.¹

Taken as a whole, the program just outlined is far more diversified than these willfully brief remarks suggest. We have limited ourselves to the strictly philosophical part of the *paideia* envisaged by Aristotle. A more exhaustive investigation would have to take into account other elements that pertain to it directly, and more

1. Needless to say, the manner in which this investigation is being conducted and its presuppositions, as exemplified in the above remarks, stand in sharp contrast with the views shared by many Aristotelian scholars today and expressed, for instance, with enviable assurance, by INGEMAR DÜHRING, *Aristotle's De Partibus Animalium, Critical, and Literary Commentaries*, Göteborg, 1943, p.7: "... Every account of Aristotle's opinion or doctrine on this or that question, based on citations indiscriminately chosen from the whole *Corpus Aristotelicum*, starts — this may be openly confessed or not — from the erroneous presumption that there is an unchangeable Aristotelian system. To those who are firmly convinced that Aristotle's views non only on biological but also on metaphysical and ethical problems and questions concerning the theory of cognition, nay, even his conceptions of the methods of science have undergone a gradual change, every such account must seem hopelessly obsolete. Nowadays nobody dreams of dealing with Plato's writings as a manifestation of one unchanged and fixed philosophical system. And similarly must he who wants to take up a position towards one of the preserved writings of Aristotle meditate the problem of designing its approximate place in Aristotle's philosophical development."

particularly the liberal arts, the traditional gateways to philosophy, as the words *trivium* and *quadrivium* by which they were commonly referred to in the Middle Ages indicate. Such an inquiry might give us a better insight into the true nature of the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία devised by the ancients : not just a grab bag or an accumulation of superficial and poorly assimilated bits of information, but a clearly defined and well-organized whole, endowed with its proper finality and possessing its own relative perfection. There can be no doubt that the student who has received this type of education, although he is still only in the early stages of his intellectual development, is better equipped for life and for the more advanced studies that lie ahead than the one who has amassed huge stores of material knowledge in a haphazard and chaotic manner.¹ Having been duly instructed with regard to the general principles that govern the various sciences as well as to the respective modes of these sciences, and having been trained to a greater or less degree in the use of these modes, he will derive greater benefit from the experience that time will bring and will find the progressive acquisition of these disciplines considerably easier in the long run.

It is precisely to the fact that it favors the development of the intellectual virtues and strives to generate in the mind of the young man a genuine ἔξις that this form of education owes its superiority to that of the Sophists, the great initiators of the pedagogical revolution that marked the fifth century B.C. The avowed aim of these Sophists, as we know from Protagoras himself, was to educate men, παιδεύειν ἀνθρώπους.² Instead of inculcating principles and relating their ideas to these principles, however, they adopted for the most part a form of teaching based solely on practice and experience.³ This method may be valid as far as it goes, and it no doubt represents an advance over what existed before ; but it also has its disadvantages. Aristotle compares it to that of the shoemaker who presents to his client a variety of shoes from which he may choose the one that fits him best.⁴ By so doing, he is certainly being helpful, but if the buyer should happen to suffer from sore feet later on, he will again be compelled to seek the services of the shoemaker. There is another course, the one which consists in imparting the art of shoemaking, thereby enabling the person to whom this instruction is given to meet his own needs as they arise. It is to this second alternative

1. One is reminded, by contrast, of the character of SARTRE's *La nausée* who longed for the education that he had not received as a boy, and who decided to make up for lost time by reading all the books in the municipal library in alphabetical order . . .

2. PLATO, *Protagoras*, 317 b ; cf. ARISTOTLE, *Soph. Refut.*, chap.34, 183 b 36 sq.

3. ARISTOTLE, *ibid.* On the methods used by the Sophists and their contribution to higher learning, cf. H. I. MARROU, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité*, second edition, Paris, 1950, pp.81 sq.

4. *Ibid.*, chap.34, 184 a 2 sq.

that the *paideia* advocated by Aristotle corresponds in the intellectual sphere.¹ The young student who has received his education in this more universal form already has the power to move forward in his quest for new knowledge and to solve his own difficulties without having to be constantly assisted by the master.

If, with these ideas in mind, we now return to the problem raised at the outset, we shall find that it is perhaps not as insoluble as it may have appeared at first glance. That a young man should still be a far cry from what we should label a philosopher in the full sense of the word will surprise no one. His knowledge necessarily remains very scanty by comparison with the vastly superior acquirements of the wise man. It does not follow, however, nor does Aristotle imply that he should not be exposed to philosophy at a relatively early age. Nothing is to prevent him from acquiring the rudiments of that science or, to use Aristotle's own term, its *paideia*, even if he cannot hope to gain a complete mastery of it until much later. What is more, there is every reason to suspect that the student who has not received the proper formation at this privileged moment will be hard pressed to attain wisdom at a more advanced age. The great educators of the past had sensed, long before our modern psychologists, the importance of these decisive and irreplaceable years. The love of Socrates for the elite of the Athenian youth, whatever suspicions it may have awakened in the minds of the multitude, cannot be explained otherwise. That he should have persistently sought the company of young men in the gymnasium and on the market place is no mere coincidence. Any hope that he may have had of recruiting prospective philosophers rested almost exclusively with them. It is less than likely that a man whose mind has already been warped by erroneous opinions and unscientific thinking habits which the years have only intensified will ever undergo the branch-and-root change that an authentically philosophical life would require.

Of this truth there is no finer illustration perhaps than Plato's *Parmenides*, in which, for the first and last time in the *Dialogues*, the resourceful Socrates, presented here as a young man, does not have the upper hand. Pitted against the now aging and white-maned Parmenides, "awe-inspiring and venerable, like Homer's hero,"²

1. The three levels of knowledge : experience, *paideia*, and science, are again listed with all the desirable clarity in the *Politics*, III, chap.6, 1282 a 1 sq.

2. PLATO, *Theaetetus*, 183 e 6. The praise contained in these words is more apparent than real, as may be seen by turning to the passage in HOMER's *Iliad* (III, 172) from which they are taken. Helen is speaking, and the "awe-inspiring and venerable" hero is none other than Priam, who is already an old man at the time of the Trojan War, who plays only an insignificant part in it, and who will soon be humiliated and forced to pay an exorbitant price for the body of his son, Hector. Priam's reign has reached its end, and, by implication, so has Parmenides'. Such is the meaning of the encounter, invented by

he grows increasingly silent and merely stands by as what had begun as a friendly conversation evolves into a monologue that will come to an abrupt end, leaving both parties further than ever away from each other. The upshot of the whole abortive discussion, one finally gathers, is that the old Eleatic philosopher, who is already reluctant to defend his own position, will never be induced to cross the "vast ocean of discourses"¹ by which he might eventually be able to give to his thought an entirely new orientation.²

Wisdom, in so far as it is accessible to man, may be the prerogative of old age, but even so, it remains the ultimate flowering of seeds planted in youth.³ This could very well be the reason why true philosophers, like the devil in *Faust*, have always felt for the young men of the city a profound and mysterious attraction.

ERNEST-L. FORTIN, A.A.

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Plato, between Socrates and his illustrious predecessor. The quotations of Plato are never chosen at random!

1. *Parmenides*, 137 a 7.

2. On the necessity of unlearning before being able to learn properly, cf. St. AUGUSTINE, *Contra Academicos*, III, chap. 17, 38: "Now, when Zeno, the founder of the Stoic School, had heard and accepted some of the teachings, he came to the school which had been founded by Plato and which Polemon was then conducting. It is my opinion that he was held suspect there. I believe he did not seem to be the kind of man to whom those Platonic and sacrosanct teachings ought to be disclosed and entrusted — at least, before he had unlearned what he had received from other schools and had brought with him to this school."

3. The same thought occurs in St. JEROME, *Epist.* 52, 2-3, p. 414, 16 sq. Hilberg (*C.S.E.L.*, 54), who finds an illustration of it in the episode of the Sunamite narrated in *III Kings*, I, 1 sq. This mysterious woman, at once virgin and spouse, turns out to be wisdom, which the young man must cultivate early in life, but which is fully possessed only in the serene and passion free atmosphere of later years.

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SOMMAIRE DES REVUES

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MODERN (THE) SCHOOLMAN, publiée par St. Louis University, États-Unis : **Vol. XXXIV, n° 2, janvier 1957** : R. H. POPKIN, *Father Mersenne's War against Pyrrhonism*. — E. CANTORE, *Philosophy in Atomic Physics: Complementarity*. — **Mars** : J. OWENS, *The Number of Terms in the Suarezian Discussion on Essence and Being*. — **Mai** : W. PERCY, *Semiotic and a Theory of Knowledge*. — L. J. ESLICK, *What is the Starting Point of Metaphysics?*

NEW (THE) SCHOLASTICISM, publiée par American Catholic Philosophical Association, États-Unis : **Vol. XXXI, n° 1, janvier 1957** : F. A. CUNNINGHAM, *The Second*

Operation and the Assent vs. Judgment in St. Thomas. — B. M. BONANSEA, *The Concept of Being and Non-Being in the Philosophy of Tommaso Campanella.* — W. W. MEISSNER, *Some Notes on a Figure in St. Thomas.* — W. H. KANE, *The Extent of Natural Philosophy.* — **Avril** : R. MCINERNY, *The Logic of Analogy.* — C. R. FAY, *The Possibility of a Critical Realism : Noël vs. Gilson.* — R. L. FARICY, *The Establishment of the Basic Principle of the Fifth Way.* — J. V. SCHALL, *Some Philosophical Aspects of Culture and Religion.*

NOUVELLE REVUE THÉOLOGIQUE, publiée sous la direction du Collège S. J. Saint-Albert, Louvain : **T. 79, n° 1, janvier 1957** : H. DUESBERG, *Horoscope du mouvement biblique.* — H. RONDET, *Aux origines de la théologie du péché.* — J.-P. AUDET, *Le sacré et le profane : leur situation en christianisme.* — P. DEVOS, *Les saints Cyrille et Méthode. Récents progrès critiques au service de l'Union.* — **Février** : E. ROCHE, *Pénitence et Conversion dans l'Évangile et la vie chrétienne.* — J.-M. AUBERT, *L'enseignement de la philosophie dans une perspective pastorale.* — M.-D. ÉPAGNEUL, *Du rôle des diacres dans l'Église d'aujourd'hui.* — B. CAPELLE, *L'œuvre liturgique de M^{or} Andrieu et la théologie.* — **Mars** : A. DE BOVIS, *L'Église dans la société temporelle.* — A. THIRY, *Jung et la religion.* — P. CHARLES, *Béatitudes...* — **Avril** : A. FEUILLET, *Le Mystère pascal et la Résurrection des chrétiens d'après les Épîtres pauliniennes.* — J. MAMBRINO, *« Les Deux Mains de Dieu » dans l'œuvre de saint Irénée.* — A. SNOECK, *La pastorale du scrupule.* — M. GUITTON, *Le réveil du jansénisme, Pasquier Quesnel et le Père de la Chaize (1696-1708).* — G. RYCKMANS, *C'est la faute au latin...* — **Mai** : G. SALET, *La Loi dans nos cœurs.* — J. GALOT, *Vierge entre les vierges.* — A. SNOECK, *La pastorale du scrupule II.* — E. RIDEAU, *Le positivisme est-il dépassé?* — **Juin** : G. SALET, *La Loi dans les cœurs (suite).* — L. MALEVEZ, *La méthode du P. Teilhard de Chardin et la Phénoménologie.* — R. MOLS, *Saint Charles Borromée, pionnier de la pastorale moderne.* — J. DELFOSSE, *C'est la faute et ce n'est pas la faute au latin.*

PENSAMIENTO, publiée par les Facultés de philosophie de la Compagnie de Jésus en Espagne : **Vol. 13, n° 49, janvier-mars 1957** : B. P. ARGOS, *Fenomenología de la percepción y las formas de la Gestalttheorie.* — J. HELLIN, *Existencialismo escolástico suareciano.* — J. M. ALEJANDRO, *El problema del método en la investigación gnoseológica.* — **Avril-juin** : A. ROLDÁN, *Vida en el laboratorio?* — M. ALONSO, *El « Liber de Unitate et Uno », Gundisalvo intérprete de si mismo.* — J. R. GIRONELLA, *El problema de los tres grados de certeza.*

PHILOSOPHICAL (THE) QUARTERLY, publiée par l'Université de St. Andrews, Écosse : **Vol. 7, n° 26, janvier 1957** : W. H. WALSH, *The Autonomy of Ethics.* — P. F. STRAWSON, *Propositions, Concepts and Logical Truths.* — D. WALSH, *Elucidation and Evaluation.* — E. E. HARRIS, *Collingwood's Theory of History.* — J. HARRISON, *Kant's Examples of the First Formulation of the Categorical Imperative.* — H. HERVEY, *The Private Language Problem.* — **Avril** : N. G. KULBARNI, *Bradley's Anti-Relational Argument.* — L. E. THOMAS, *Looking.* — D. S. SHWAYDER, *The Sense of Duty.* — J. HARTLAND-SWANN, *« Being Aware Of » and « Knowing ».* — J. KING-FARLOW, *From « God » to « Is » and from « Is » to « Ought ».*

PHILOSOPHY, publiée par The Royal Institute of Philosophy, Londres : **Vol. XXXII, n° 120, janvier 1957** : N. K. SMITH, *Fear : Its Nature and Diverse Uses.* — W. F. R. HARDIE, *My Own Free Will.* — J. HARTLAND-SWANN, *Knowing Involves Deciding.* — R. HARRÉ, *Dissolving the « Problem » of Induction.* — **Avril** : K. BRITTON, *Feelings and their expression.* — J. W. N. WATKINS, *Between Analytic and Empirical.* — W. B. GALLIE, *The Lord's Debate on Hanging, July 1956 : Interpretation and Comment.* — P. REMNENT, *Moral Facts.* — R. F. ATKINSON, *J. S. Mill's « Proof » of the Principle of Utility.*

PHILOSOPHY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH, publiée par l'Université de Buffalo, U.S.A. : **Vol. XVII, n° 3, mars 1957** : P. T. RAJU, *Being, Existence, Reality, and Truth.* — J. KAMINSKY, *Dewey's Concept of An Experience.* — E. M. ALBERT, *Value*

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